



Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

workers.org

GCU

MAY 29, 2008

VOL. 50, NO. 21

50¢

China mobilizes to save lives & rebuild

Swift, massive efforts contrast with U.S. gov't response to Katrina

By Deirdre Griswold

GIS FIGHT BACK

A growing movement 2

ATTACK ON SUDAN

Who's behind it and why 8



AMERICAN AXLE DEAL

Is this the best possible? 5



MARXIST from INDIA

Fighting globalization 6



WW in 1971

ATTICA UPRISING

10

Subscribe to Workers World

Four weeks trial: \$1 One year: \$25

NAME _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

WORKERS WORLD

55 W. 17 St. NY, NY 10011 212-627-2994 www.workers.org

The People's Republic of China suffered an earthquake of immense proportions on May 12 in the southwest province of Sichuan. One week later, the toll of known dead had risen to more than 40,000 and was expected to keep growing. Some 3 million people have been left homeless.

The rescue and relief effort has been immediate and huge. By the eighth day, despite blocked roads, landslides and deadly aftershocks in the mountainous area, rescuers had reached all 1,044 villages hit by the quake. More than 150,000 soldiers were deployed in rescue and relief. Some 250,000 people were being treated for injuries, most caused by collapsed buildings.

After a week, people were still being pulled out of the rubble alive, including a 60-year-old woman rescued in Pengzhou 196 hours after the quake. She was conscious and rushed to a hospital by helicopter.

Communications, power, industry and mining were almost completely destroyed in the seven most damaged counties, according to China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. Because the government plays a dominant role in China's national economy, it has been able to quickly mobilize resources for the rebuilding of the area. It announced that after a week all affected cities and towns had working communications equipment, including 1,000 satellite phones distributed to the area.

Detailed reports on the many ways in which the government has been working to restore communications so survivors can contact their families and health workers can order needed supplies can be found at china.org.cn.

Soldiers and other rescue workers have made a heroic effort to reach remote villages. Nearly 170 of them have died in landslides caused by strong aftershocks.

U.N.: Area not considered at great risk

There is little coverage of China's great struggle in most Western media, which are quick to criticize the government

for not being prepared. However, Chinese building codes for the area had been based on an assessment of earthquake risk "considered equivalent to that of the Global Hazard Seismic Assessment Program, a U.N.-endorsed project designed to reduce the toll from natural hazards," wrote the Britain-based magazine *New Scientist* on May 13. "GHSAP predicted Sichuan had a 10 percent risk in 50 years of experiencing an earthquake that would cause a peak ground acceleration of 1.6 m/s squared—which is at the mid-level of extremity."

Instead, said Hong Hao, a civil engineer at the University of Western Australia in Perth, this earthquake "far exceeded that, perhaps by a factor of five. By some estimates at its epicenter, the energy released would have been equivalent to 300 to 400 Hiroshima atomic bombs."

Although no one had expected a quake of this extreme intensity, the Chinese government moved very swiftly and decisively to save lives among those who survived the disaster.

Within two hours, Premier Wen Jiabao was put in charge of disaster relief and had boarded a plane to Sichuan. By the following day, even as drenching rain was falling over the area, thousands of soldiers, police, firefighters and other relief workers were already trying to open up blocked roads, repair bridges and dig people out of collapsed buildings.

The army started to parachute soldiers and supplies into the worst hit areas as others were still hiking in on foot. By midnight of the second day, "The first rescue team of about 800 soldiers forced its way into the epicenter Wenchuan amid heavy rain and rescue operations began." (china.org.cn)

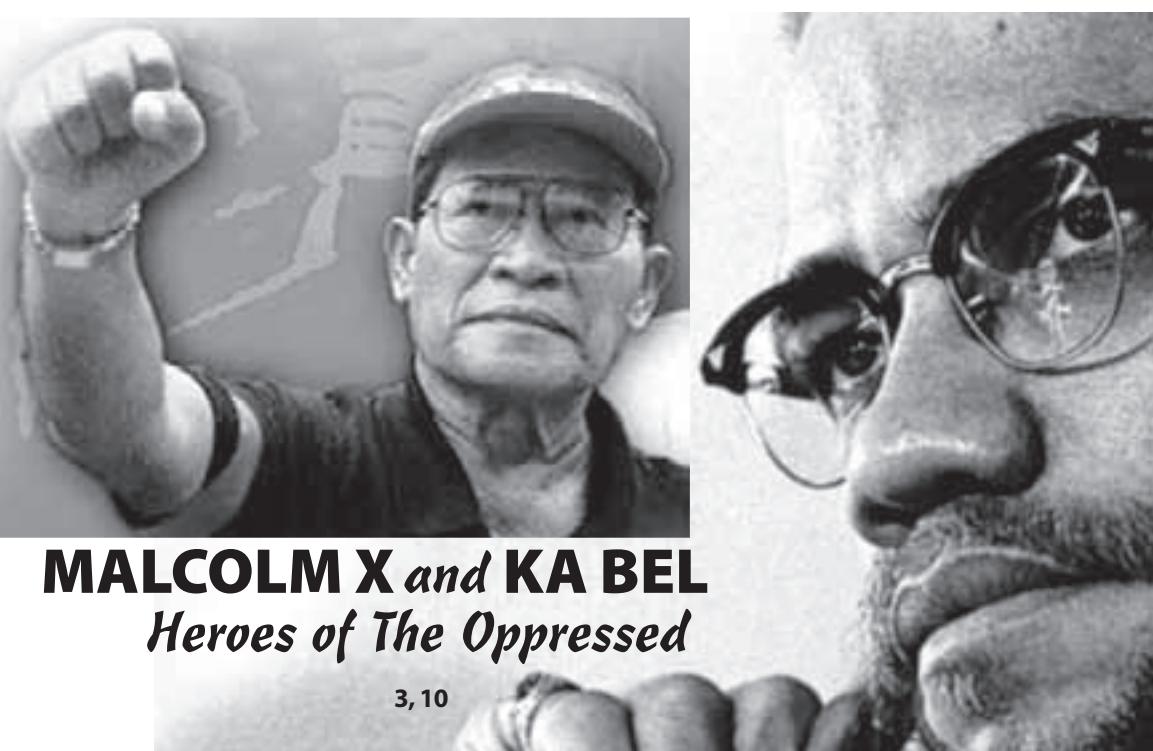
All over China, people are responding to the Communist Party's call for support with money and other aid. Some \$2 billion has already been sent in money and supplies to the devastated area. One week after the quake struck, the whole country stopped work for 3 minutes to honor the victims.

Chinese and international scientists now say the earthquake reached 8.0 on the Richter scale. On this scale, one full point represents a tenfold increase in magnitude. By comparison, the

Continued on page 9

DEFEND OBAMA AGAINST RACISM

3, 10



MALCOLM X and KA BEL
Heroes of The Oppressed

3, 10

GI's, vet resisters take lead in anti-war actions

By John Catalinotto

Veterans groups and individual GI resisters and their supporters have taken the lead in the U.S. anti-war movement. In mid-May there were multiple reports of war refusals and one mass protest at a major military training base for troops headed for Iraq and Afghanistan.

Near Fort Drum in upstate New York, the Watertown-based Different Drummer Café joined with the Iraq Veterans Against the War and peace activists who had marched from the upstate cities of Rochester, Ithaca and Utica to hold a festival on May 17, Armed Forces Day.

Drummer organizer Tod Ensign told Workers World that as the official Armed Forces Day Parade ended outside the Dulles Federal Building, Col. Kenneth Riddle, Fort Drum's garrison commander, found himself surrounded by IVAW members in their black T-shirts.

When asked about the failure of the command to address Iraq veterans' problems with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), all Col. Riddle could say was, "I just got here two weeks ago." Though the vets requested a meeting, Riddle begged it off.

The festival, scheduled for a campsite and including five popular musical performances, moved inside to the Different Drummer when rain started. One observer described the scene: "Veterans and anti-warriors from at least four U.S. wars mingled happily together. The Drummer was bursting at the seams, as festival participants spilled on to the mall walkway outside while over 50 danced and celebrated inside."

An African-American veteran read a poem dedicated to his wife, a soldier who has been called up for a second tour of duty in Iraq. She was in the audience holding their 7-month-old son. The couple received a tremendous outpouring of sympathy, including assurances of legal, moral and practical support, whatever choice they make.

Ensign noted the atmosphere of mutual understanding between the upstate peace movement and the soldiers just now beginning to question the war. Another good point was the marchers' reception in a traditionally conservative area—a local American Legion chapter hosted the marchers for dinner and let them stay in their hall for the night. Plus the marchers got relatively good publicity in both local upstate press and in the New York Times. (May 15)

Ensign told how Gen. Michael Oates, commander of Fort Drum's 10th Mountain Division, had released a conciliatory statement during the week that he "welcomed" the peace marchers, saw "no problem" with their demonstrating on base if they didn't block traffic, and said active-duty GIs could join in if they didn't wear uniforms.

Support for resisters

Other signs of the disenchantment with the wars were the growing number of war resisters.

One is Army PFC **Ryan Jackson**, who was formally charged with multiple counts of being absent without leave, stemming from his attempt to be released from the Army prior to Iraq deployment. His special court

martial—with a maximum one-year prison sentence—on these charges is set for May 30 at Fort Gordon, Ga.

"Since I joined up with Courage to Resist and Iraq Veterans Against the War, my life has changed. I plan to write a book about all of this, and to make positive change in my community when I get out," said Jackson before turning himself in at Fort Sill, Okla., on April 4.

Dianne Mathiowetz, the Atlanta coordinator for the International Action Center, told WW, "Support for Ryan Jackson is building with activists in the Augusta area near Fort Gordon. Also, the Georgia Peace and Justice Coalition and the IAC are mobilizing to attend the vigil the night of May 29 and the court martial. All members of the military who refuse to participate in this illegal war of occupation deserve our full support."

IVAW member **Matthis Chiroux** announced on May 15 in Washington, D.C., his refusal to report to active duty. Sgt. Chiroux, who is originally from Auburn, Ala., has done tours in Germany, Afghanistan and the Philippines since his June 2002 enlistment.

"As an Army journalist whose job it was to collect and filter service members' stories," Chiroux said, "I heard many stomach-churning testimonies of the horrors and crimes taking place in Iraq. For fear of retaliation from the military, I failed to report these crimes, but never again will I allow fear to silence me. Never again will I fail to stand."

Chiroux announced his courageous decision in the Cannon House Office Building rotunda, after fellow IVAW members testified before the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

During a court martial May 13 at Rose Barracks in Vilseck, Germany, U.S. Army conscientious objector **Robert Weiss** was sentenced to seven months confinement. Weiss pled guilty to charges of desertion and missing movement. Weiss had learned in December 2007 that his conscientious objector application was denied.

Bryan Currie says he joined the Army in November 2004 because "I thought it would be a good thing to fight for my country." He was trained as an Infantry Grenadier and was deployed to Afghanistan in 2006 for 11 months. He describes what he experienced when he got injured:

"We were on a convoy to pick up another soldier. I was the driver. On the way back my truck got hit by a land mine. ... I got burned, I lost four teeth, broke my jaw, got shrapnel on my hands, I was jolted forward so my knees are all swollen and my back's always sore." He was treated in Afghanistan, was out of combat for three weeks and then was sent back to drive trucks.

When he returned to the U.S., he saw several military psychiatrists who treated him for PTSD. "They'd give you a bag of pills and they'd say, 'Here, try these and if that one doesn't work try another and if you find one that does, stick to it.'" Ordered to redeploy despite his injuries, Currie packed his bags and left. He is currently AWOL and says he is now "100 percent against the military. I've done a complete U-turn."

For more information on aiding resisters, see courage-toresist.org, ivaw.org and differentdrummercafe.org.

E-mail: jcat@workers.org

To receive Workers World Newspaper in 2008 Eight-week trial subscription for \$4 One year for \$25

SUBSCRIBE

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____ EMAIL _____
Clip & return to WW Publishers 55 W. 17th St., 5th Fl., NY, NY 10011 212.627.2994 email: ww@workers.org www.workers.org

JOIN US.

Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latin@, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed and students.

If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

National Office

55 W. 17 St.,
New York, NY 10011
212-627-2994;
Fax (212) 675-7869

[www@workers.org](mailto:wwp@workers.org)

Atlanta

P.O. Box 424,
Atlanta, GA 30301
404-627-0185

atlanta@workers.org

Baltimore

426 E. 31 St.,
Baltimore, MD 21218
410-235-7040

baltimore@workers.org

Boston

284 Amory St.,
Boston, MA 02130
617-983-3835

boston@workers.org

workersworld.net/boston

Buffalo, N.Y.

367 Delaware Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14202
716-566-1115

buffalo@workers.org

Chicago

27 N. Wacker Dr. #138
Chicago, IL 60606
773-381-5839

chicago@workers.org

Cleveland

P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
216-531-4004

cleveland@workers.org

Denver

denver@workers.org

Detroit

5920 Second Ave.,
Detroit, MI 48202
313-831-0750

detroit@workers.org

Houston

P.O. Box 595
Houston, TX 77001-0595
713-861-5965

houston@workers.org

Los Angeles

111 N. La Brea Ave., #408
Inglewood, CA 90301
310-677-8647

la@workers.org

Milwaukee

milwaukee@workers.org

Philadelphia

P.O. Box 9202,
Philadelphia, PA 19139
610-931-2615

phila@workers.org

Raleigh, N.C.

raleigh@workers.org

Richmond, Va.

P.O. Box 14602,
Richmond, VA 23221
richmond@workers.org

Rochester, N.Y.

585-436-6458
rochester@workers.org

San Diego, Calif.

P.O. Box 33447
San Diego, CA 92104
619-692-0355

San Francisco

2940 16th St., #207
San Francisco, CA 94103
415-738-4739

sf@workers.org

Washington, D.C.

P.O. Box 57300,
Washington, DC 20037,
dc@workers.org

This week ...

WORKERS WORLD
WW

★ In the U.S.

GI's take lead in anti-war actions	2
Racist depiction of Obama creates outrage	3
Philadelphia: City of brotherly thugs	3
Tribute on Malcolm X's birthday	3
Coalition mobilizes for moratorium bill	4
ICE attacks immigrants in Iowa	4
Home-care workers	4
Tentative agreement in American Axle strike	5
OSHA slammed for low fines in worker deaths	5
Anti-imperialist leader from India in Boston	6
Philadelphia rally counters pro-Zionist affair	7
WW in 1971: The prisoners of Attica	10

★ Around the world

China mobilizes to save lives & rebuild	1
Indian Marxist on globalization	6
Pakistani people push back	7
Deir Yassin survivors recount terror	7
French demonstrations protest job cuts	7
Sudan maintains defiance	8
While U.S. education falters, Venezuela thrives	9
Cuba's role in promoting Haiti's literacy	9

★ Editorials

Long live the legacy of Ka Bel!	10
Defend Obama against racist attacks	10

★ Noticias En Español

Latinoamerica confronta crisis de hambruna	12
--	----

Workers World

55 West 17 Street
New York, N.Y. 10011
Phone: (212) 627-2994
Fax: (212) 675-7869
E-mail: editor@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org

Vol. 50, No. 21 • May 29, 2008

Closing date: May 21, 2008

Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Technical Editor: Lal Roohk

Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Leslie Feinberg, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson

West Coast Editor: John Parker

Contributing Editors: Greg Butterfield, G. Dunkel, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales, David Hoskins, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Cheryl LaBash, Milt Neidenberg, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Minnie Bruce Pratt

Technical Staff: Shelley Ettinger, Bob McCubbin, Maggie Vascassenno

Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Teresa Gutierrez, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Donna Lazarus, Michael Martinez, Carlos Vargas

Internet: Janet Mayes

Supporter Program: Sue Davis, coordinator

Copyright © 2008 Workers World. Verbatim copying and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium without royalty provided this notice is preserved.

Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994.

Subscriptions: One year: \$25; foreign and institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at www.workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.



Racist depiction of Obama creates outrage

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

When the owner of a bar in Marietta, Ga., advertised the sale of a racially offensive T-shirt depicting Barak Obama as the monkey "Curious George," community activists took immediate action, releasing a news statement and organizing a protest in front of Mulligan's Bar and Grill on May 13.

Initiated by immigrant rights advocates, the coalition included the Cobb County chapters of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Nation of Islam, Latino Alliance for Human Rights and New Order Human Rights Organization among many others.

The bar owner, Mike Norman, has a history of placing racist and derogatory messages on his outdoor sign. In the recent period he has targeted immigrants as Cobb County undergoes a dramatic demographic change from a conservative, white, rural county on Atlanta's northwestern boundary to a thoroughly multinational urban area.

The bar's interior is decorated with Minutemen recruiting posters, a large display of weapons and dozens of reactionary political bumper stickers.

Two days after the successful protest, which drew national coverage, a suspicious package addressed to the "Cobb Latino Alliance," with a drawing of a figure hanging or burning from a cross, was left on the doorstep of Rich Pellegrino's home. Pellegrino, who had first alerted the community about the T-shirts, also was receiving threatening e-mails. Police officials are investigating the matter as a hate crime.

The newly formed Cobb United for Change Coalition (CUCC) is moving forward with plans for a Unity and Victory Civil Rights Rally this week to be followed later by a town hall meeting.

Organizers are all too aware of the notoriously reactionary history of Marietta and Cobb County stretching back to the 1900s when Jewish factory owner Leo Frank was lynched by a mob of local prominent businessmen and public officials after being falsely convicted of murdering a young female worker.

For many years active Ku Klux Klan chapters functioned throughout the county with their headquarters located right off the downtown square in Marietta. The interstate highway running through Cobb County is named for Larry McDonald, who headed the virulently anti-communist John Birch Society, which opposed the civil rights movement and hounded Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. More recently politicians such as Newt Gingrich, a major proponent of social service cutbacks, rose to national prominence representing Cobb County. Prior to the 1996 Olympic Games held in Atlanta, the Cobb County Commission passed an anti-gay resolution, declaring "the gay lifestyle" as "incompatible with community standards." Following protests, the U.S. Olympic Committee withdrew all scheduled events in the face of such blatant discrimination.

The Georgia legislature has passed some of the most reactionary anti-immigrant legislation in the country with much of the impetus coming from forces based in Cobb County. Its police agencies cooperate with Immigration

and Customs Enforcement in deporting drivers caught in traffic stops without Georgia licenses.

However, according to Pelligrino, the CUCC, composed of white, African-American, Latin@ and immigrant members, is "a historic breakthrough for Cobb County, which reflects hope for the future." Rather than being intimidated, the CUCC is reaching out on a national as well as local level to elevate solidarity and human respect.

WWP holds Obama discussion

The same evening as the protest at Mulligan's, the Atlanta chapter of Workers World Party held a round-table discussion entitled "Obama, Racism and the Economic Crisis" featuring Monica Moorehead, an editor of WW newspaper; Alice Lovelace, poet and national coordinator of the US Social Forum; and Gary Washington, Teamster steward and host of a weekly radio program, The Labor Forum, on WRFG.

The lively and thoughtful discussion clarified not only why the Obama candidacy has aroused the emotions of so many people tired of racism, war and oppression but also why the election of Barak Obama would not be sufficient to make the fundamental change needed.

Moorehead referenced the struggle over the racist T-shirt as an example of how only the united movement of workers of all nationalities, whether documented or not, will be the key to real change. The 30 people, who filled the room to capacity—half people of color with many youth—all agreed that they wanted more opportunities to talk and learn about revolutionary politics. □

On Malcolm X's birthday

Tribute to 'a martyr for all the oppressed'

By Larry Hales

Forty-three years have passed since Malcolm X was assassinated at the Audubon Ballroom in front of a crowd of hundreds, including his wife and their young children. This May 19 would have been his 83rd birthday.

It is perhaps unfair and not dialectical to hypothesize on what he may have become were Malcolm X still alive today. It was his keen ability to articulate the mood of the Black masses; his unwaveringness; his presence and skills as an orator, but also as an organizer that the state deemed too dangerous, which is why he was assassinated.

He should be commemorated because of his brilliance, for what he stood for, the things he said and did, and because, simply, he was a defiant person who rose from the conditions imposed upon the oppressed Black masses—singed but still amongst the masses, still surrounded by the ardor to confront the fire starter—the oppressor.

He was for Black people, as Ossie Davis eulogized, "a shining Black prince." But he is also a martyr for all the oppressed around the world, the great mass of humanity—from the internally oppressed within the U.S., the prison house of nations, to around

the world, from Latin America and Africa to Europe, Asia and Australia.

Many claim Malcolm X, and it is the right of any Black person to do so, even a sexist right-wing pig like Supreme Court judge Clarence Thomas. Because where would Clarence Thomas be had it not been for fighters such as Malcolm X?

However, what Malcolm became cannot be undone. By his own words, he was a revolutionary, a Black revolutionary. And a revolutionary is not interested in more of the same, but a topsy-turvy world—where those on the bottom arrive at the top; where the exploited supplant the exploiter and the masses become the rulers.

On capitalism, Malcolm said in 1965: "It is impossible for capitalism to survive, primarily because the system of capitalism needs some blood to suck. ... As the nations of the world free themselves, then capitalism has less victims, less to suck, and it becomes weaker and weaker. It's only a matter of time in my opinion before it will collapse completely."

Also in 1965 Malcolm said: "All over the world, it is young people who are actually involving themselves in the struggle to eliminate oppression and exploitation. They are the ones who most quickly identify with the struggle and the necessity to eliminate the con-

ditions that exist."

And in 1964, on the concept of political power, he said: "Power in defense of freedom is greater than power in behalf of tyranny and oppression, because power, real power, comes from conviction which produces action, uncompromising action. It also produces insurrection against oppression. This is the only way you end oppression—with power."

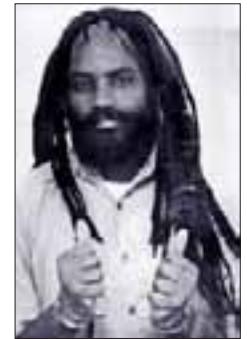
So, if Malcolm X were still alive, maybe the conditions of the world would be the same. But he would still possess that piercing gaze, the keen intellect, the same optimistic outlook and militancy.

If asked about the prospects for continuing worldwide struggle in 2009, we can infer from what he said regarding 1965, being a student of the long view of history: "Well, 1965 will probably be the longest, hottest, bloodiest summer that has yet been seen in the United States since the beginning of the Black revolution, primarily because the same causes that existed in the winter of 1964 still exist in January—in February of 1965. Now, these are causes of inferior housing, inferior employment, inferior education.

"All the evils of a bankrupt society still exist where Black Americans are concerned, and the resentment that exists has increased tremendously."

From Mumia Abu-Jamal on death row

PHILADELPHIA: City of brotherly thugs



From a May 8 audio column.
Go to www.prisonradio.org to hear Mumia's audio messages and www.millions4mumia.org to read updates on his case.

The scene is as common as sunlight: cops beating Black men in the streets.

This time, captured on videotape from a hovering helicopter, a malevolent swarm of cops pull occupants from a car, and then proceed to beat the paste out of the men, kicking, punching and slamming with a club. At least 15 cops are seen in the broadcast beat down; an average of five to one.

Within moments of its broadcast came the predictable defense: cops in Philly are "stressed." One need not even await such defenses anymore; just put a tape on speed dial and repeat. If ever there was irony, the three car occupants were charged with aggravated assault and criminal conspiracy.

How much do you wanna bet that the cops, who were caught on film in the midst of aggravated assault—and as they committed the crime in common, criminal conspiracy—are never charged with these crimes—and probably will never be arrested?

How can I dare make such a claim? Well, I have plenty of practice.

Most folks flash back to the infamous Rodney King case, where cops in L.A. went into a whipping fit because King tried to outrun them. Were they too, stressed?

It also reminded me of the taped beating of Delbert Africa, a MOVE member who was beaten during the August 8, 1978, police raid on MOVE's home.

These cops, too, were easily acquitted by explicit judicial decree. If tape doesn't matter, what does?

In the case against three cops who rifle-butted, punched and kicked Delbert, the judge ignored the videotapes and cited both Delbert's muscularity and the claim of a Black TV reporter, who claimed she saw him armed; this, despite the tape showing him shirtless, empty hands opened and naked from the waist up!

Prepare for the all but inevitable whitewash. Look at that tape again, and you will see something that you'll see if you looked at a gang attack, for these are gangsters, pure and simple. Only it's the blue gang.

Welcome to Philadelphia: the city of brotherly thugs.

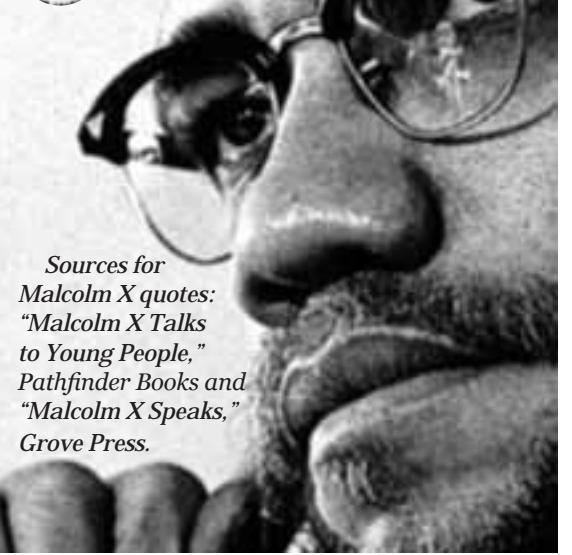
□

Forty-three years have passed since Malcolm X was assassinated—43 long years of imperialist exploitation and bloodshed; and capitalism intends to give no respite, as it seeks even greater profit. The resentment that it breeds, and the anger over the conditions it creates around the world, grows; and as history illustrates, times can and do change, and it is the struggle of the ruled over the rulers that always has and will continue to bring change—profound, revolutionary change.

It has been
83 years since
the birth of Malcolm;
he should be commemorated
by struggling forward.



Sources for
Malcolm X quotes:
"Malcolm X Talks
to Young People,"
Pathfinder Books and
"Malcolm X Speaks,"
Grove Press.



'WE HAVE TO HIT THE STREETS'

People's coalition mobilizes to win passage of moratorium bill

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Detroit

In an ongoing effort to win passage of a two-year moratorium in Michigan, the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions met May 17 to continue building a fighting mass people's movement.

The multinational meeting at the Central United Methodist Church in downtown Detroit included participants from a wide range of labor, community, religious and student organizations.

Rep. John Conyers stressed the seriousness of the moratorium struggle, saying it's a crime for poor and working people to be foreclosed on and evicted, or have their water and lights cut off due to inability to pay. "We have to nationalize this moratorium movement. This is a global situation," he said.

Conyers and all other participants pledged to continue mobilizing to win passage of the two-year moratorium bill, SB 1306, recently introduced in the Michigan legislature by state Sen. Hansen Clarke.

SB 1306 would allow a homeowner facing foreclosure to go to court for an automatic stay, which would delay a sheriff's sale for two years or extend the repayment period from six months to two years. The court would set a reasonable repayment plan based in part on the borrower's income and ability to pay. The law would be in effect for three years, meaning that anyone in foreclosure at the time the law is enacted, or is placed in foreclosure during that three-year period, could take advantage of the moratorium.

Bruce Feaster of Sen. Clarke's office told coalition participants that "you are the lobbyists" for this bill. He described how the banks pay millions to their lobbyists to get what they want, but that there are more poor and working people than bankers. Feaster called for an all-out mobilization to win passage of the bill, with tactics such as contacting legislators, organizing town hall meetings, people's delegations to Lansing and much more to build pressure from below to build a movement that can't be denied.

In an effort to win passage of the bill, moratorium coalition members have thus far spoken at numerous events and distributed thousands of leaflets throughout Metro Detroit and throughout the state, including Upper Michigan. This work is being conducted through rapid response,

office and clerical staffing, visual documentation, research, press and outreach, and speakers committees.

'They can't get away with this!'

At every moratorium organizers' meeting, horrendous and heartbreak details of victims of foreclosures and evictions emerge.

At the May 17 meeting Diane Campbell, an African-American Detroit resident, described how a longtime friend and neighbor of hers, Charlie, and another man were recently blown up in a home in Detroit. Charlie had owned his own home for more than 20 years, but when his home was foreclosed he was forced to sleep wherever he could.

Eventually Charlie returned to his foreclosed home to rest one evening. When he lit a cigarette, the house blew up because of a massive gas leak that was never repaired by the gas company. A man sleeping upstairs also perished. According to Charlie's friend, the entire block shook from the explosion, which put many more people at risk of serious harm or death.

After hearing this, Debbie Johnson of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition said:

"We need a multipronged approach. We have to target the banks and Detroit Energy. We can't allow them to get away with this. They are responsible."

At the May 17 meeting two action proposals were unanimously adopted. On Friday, June 6, from 4 to 6 p.m., a march and rally targeting banks and financial institutions responsible for the moratorium disaster will be held in downtown Detroit. More than 72,000 homes faced foreclosure in Detroit in 2007.

And on June 14 a statewide organizers' conference from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and a Town Meeting from 2 to 4 p.m. will take place, sponsored and chaired by Sen. Clarke at the UAW Local 7 hall, 2600 Conner St. in Detroit. Sen. Clarke will take testimony from foreclosure and eviction victims at this event and a legal clinic will operate to assist victims as well.

These events and more over the summer are being organized with the goal of having a mass action at the state Capitol in Lansing in early fall 2008.

In an effort to build the moratorium movement's campaign coordination and outreach, the Rev. Ed Rowe of the Central United Methodist Church has donated

office space for the Moratorium NOW! Coalition at his church at 23 E. Adams, 4th Floor, Detroit, MI 48226. Donations can be sent to this address.

Caleb Maupin, the moratorium coalition's intern, announced at the meeting that the office is now officially open, with hours from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Maupin said that this would be "an office of action" where leaflets, outreach information and much more will always be available. Leaflet delivery is also possible by calling the office at 313-964-5813.

Pastor Golliday in Benton Harbor has also endorsed the moratorium bill, and is using his church as an organizing center in Western Michigan.

"We're about action and we have to hit the streets to win this moratorium," said David Sole, an organizer with the Moratorium NOW! Coalition and president of United Auto Workers Local 2334.

The next Moratorium NOW! organizers' meeting is May 31, 2 p.m. at the Central United Methodist Church.

See the coalition's Web site for PDF leaflets, videos and more: www.moratorium-mi.org.

More terror raids

ICE attacks immigrants in Iowa

Following are excerpts from a May 19 press release issued by the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. (www.nnirr.org)

The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights condemns the latest Department of Homeland Security immigration raid carried out on May 12, by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) against immigrant workers at a meat-packing plant in Postville, Iowa.

ICE's actions have left the people of Postville in a state of shock, as its very social and economic well-being has been called into question, threatening the future of its residents. After the ICE raid, scores of immigrant workers and their family members fled to a local church.

Workers at the Postville plant were reported to be in a labor dispute with employers. Despite policy prohibiting immigration police interference and ignor-

ing union organizers' pleas, ICE amassed a small army and proceeded to carry out a massive operation in the early hours of the day. ICE used two helicopters and brought in over 200 federal, county and local police agents including from ICE, the FBI and other federal and local agencies, and dozens of vehicles and buses to haul off workers.

ICE began unleashing a series of raids in different parts of the country that started right before and continued after the national May 1 mass mobilizations. In mid-April, ICE immigration enforcement raids struck Poultry Pride plants in five different states, another meat-processing company, arresting over 300 workers. Then on May 2 in northern California, ICE took action against a small family-owned restaurant chain in six cities, arresting over 60 workers. Then during May 5-6, ICE stationed themselves in front of one elementary public school and one high school in Oakland and Berkeley, Calif., arresting at least four persons and scaring the hell out of students, parents and workers. ICE arrests hundreds of documented and undocumented immigrants every day in border and non-border regions of the country, incarcerating as many as 30,000 immigrants on any given week, through raids and other means.

Biggest raid to cover up immigrant jail abuses?

ICE's timing of the Postville raids is also questionable. In the days leading up to this raid, major newspapers reports were exposing the harsh conditions ICE subjects persons to in immigration detention, including the revelation that dozens of immigrants have died in detention over the last few years from abusive treatment and lack of medical care.

Then ICE delivered a devastating blow to Postville, a small town with 2,273 residents. By calling Postville the largest raid in history, ICE was drawing attention away from the on-going exposé of the harsh conditions in ICE jails. While ICE has arrested more workers in previous

sweeps, in Postville some 390 workers were arrested, out of some 900 workers at the plant.

ICE gave the Postville immigrant community no warning of this monstrous assault. In the weekend before the ICE raid, community members were aghast at the preparations they were witnessing: Department of Homeland Security began amassing police agents and the resources to carry out this crushing blow against workers, including setting up a temporary jail at a nearby "Cattle Congress" facility, where the men were jailed. Women were put in the local jail.

After the raid, ICE stifled the immigrant workers' access to legal counsel. And, in the days and weeks leading up to the raid, multi-agency collaboration DHS investigations included getting addresses, social security numbers and other private information about the workers' families, youth and students from the local school district.

Stop the ICE raids, end detentions and deportations

ICE deliberately uses raids to send shock waves through immigrant communities, to repress rights and suppress organizing efforts, as well as to promote and showcase new enforcement policies and strategies. The results are devastating: families are separated, communities are traumatized and the economic losses caused by immigration enforcement are almost exclusively borne by immigrants and their communities.

ICE's actions against Postville were a deliberate attack on the rights and well-being of immigrants everywhere. ICE raids expose workers to further exploitation and undermine labor rights and unions; they help perpetuate abuses and act as a cover-up mechanism for other violations that go unpunished. After an ICE raid, parents stop sending their children to school, they stop going to work, to church and avoid shopping and other public spaces out of fear. ICE makes communities vulnerable to abuse, crime and violence. □

Home-care workers call out the bosses:

'They take the money—cheap, cheap!'

One hundred home-care workers protested at the entrance to two home-care agencies, All Season and Prestige Care, in New York City's Chinatown May 20. In spite of a heavy downpour, the spirited picket line was powerful.

With support from home-care members of the 1199SEIU union local present, the agencies were attacked for paying only \$7.15 an hour, without benefits. Fighting for a union contract with 1199SEIU for more than a year, these mostly Asian workers enjoyed the solidarity from the union's home-care workers—Haitian, Filipina, Latin@, Black, West Indian and Asian—who chanted "Shame on you!" to the bosses.

The event's flier, in two languages, described how "home-care workers provide comfort and care to the elderly and disabled ... so they can live in their homes with



dignity. We are devoted caregivers, who deserve to be able to care for ourselves and our families."

—Report and photo by Anne Pruden

Fight back still needed as

Tentative agreement reached in American Axle strike

By Bryan G. Pfeifer

Detroit

May 21—Following a courageous and heroic workers' strike at American Axle & Manufacturing, the United Auto Workers International and the local's bargaining teams came to a tentative contract agreement the evening of May 16.

The AAM strike, which since Feb. 26 has lasted for more than three months, is the eighth-longest strike in UAW history.

Informational meetings were held in every local almost immediately after the tentative agreement, and voting took place May 19 for Local 846 at the Cheektowaga and Tonawanda, N.Y., plants; Local 2093 in Three Rivers; and Local 262 at the Detroit Forge. According to preliminary reports from union leaders, the tentative agreement has been approved by all of the locals voting on it thus far. The decisive vote will take place at Local 235 in Hamtramck, Mich., on May 22.

Why the rush to judgment?

The leadership of UAW President Ron Gettelfinger has been pushing for a concessionary contract even before the strike began. They even canceled a massive solidarity demonstration April 18 to weaken and undermine the support that was needed to strengthen the strike.

With 30 General Motors Corp. plants idled because of the AAM strike, two local unions fighting supplementary agreements also struck against GM. The fight-back mood of tens of thousands of UAW and other union rank-and-file members internationally, as well as community supporters, hasn't been seriously organized by the UAW International to fight American Axle on a serious mass scale.

The tactics and strategy of the International leadership flow from its deadly ideology. Kevin Donovan, UAW Region 9 Assistant Director, reflects the orientation of the Gettelfinger strategy to help management become more "market-

competitive."

In approving this tentative agreement, "We put ourselves in a very good competitive position with this contract to bid on future work at Cheektowaga," said Donovan in the May 20 edition of *Business First*.

American Axle CEO Richard Dauch and his Wall Street backers are laughing all the way to the bank. Initial reports claim American Axle will be robbing at least \$185 million from the workers, their loved ones and their communities with the 2008-2012 contract, if approved.

In Detroit, an informational meeting was held May 18 for Local 235, the largest local with more than 1,900 members, less than 48 hours after the tentative agreement was reached. At the packed meeting, strikers were angry over the agreement's details and what the majority saw as a too-quick timeline for voting, which was scheduled for the next day. After much resistance from the strikers, voting for Local 235 members only was pushed to May 22, and more informational meetings were scheduled leading up to the vote.

Even the extended time is not enough to dissect and analyze pages and pages of life-and-death issues within the tentative agreement. Doesn't the rank and file have a democratic right to study their tentative contract? Why is the International not making this time available?

'Vote it down!'

The majority of Local 235 members leaving the May 18 meeting were angry at what they called a horrendous and precedent-setting tentative agreement.

"I would vote it down," said Byrone Lanna, an African-American worker who began working for GM in 1976 and once worked at American Axle for three years.

The tentative contract agreement is rife with steep concessions and givebacks.

According to a leaflet entitled "Is This The Best We Can Do?" which is being distributed at the Local 235 union hall

Auto workers have been striking since Feb. 26.

WW PHOTO: ALAN POLLOCK

by Shifting Gears, a newsletter by and for the UAW/AAM rank and file, some of the most onerous provisions for the 2008-2012 contract include:

- Wages would be slashed on average \$10 outright for current workers and wages would be at different scales between plants. At Detroit Gear, production workers would range from \$14.35 to \$18.50 per hour, at Cheektowaga \$14.35 to \$16.50 and at Three Rivers \$10 to \$18;
- For the first time, workers would have to pay health care co-pays and deductibles;
- Only the Detroit gear and axle plant and Cheektowaga would be in the master agreement; the Three Rivers plant would be on its own;
- A no-strike clause would, in effect, take these locals out of the Big Three-UAW umbrella;
- New hires in Detroit would start at \$11.50 with no cost-of-living adjustments for the life of the contract and no dental coverage for the first three years of the contract;
- The closing of the Detroit Forge and Tonawanda, N.Y., plants within the next year;
- Pensions frozen as of January 2009 and the implementation of a 401K plan at that time;
- The combination of skilled trades into only four classifications and reduction of their hourly wage;
- Overtime would kick in after a 40-hour week, not an 8-hour day;
- Limited and underfunded.



Supplemental Unemployment Benefit fund of \$18 million;

- Various buyout packages up to \$140,000, which are subject to being taxed;
- Buy-downs of up to \$105,000 over three years as workers' pay is reduced to the new lower rate. But not all workers would see this much because this amount depends on the amount of wage reduction a worker is forced into. Furthermore, laid-off workers would have their buy-downs reduced to exclude their unemployment pay.

This is only a partial list.

Lanna says there's an alternative to these massive concessions: resistance. He says his co-workers can vote no, continue striking and regroup to fight for a solid contract. Lanna and others opposing the agreement suggest building a massive, internationalist labor-community support network, organizing protests at the plant and throughout the community, rallies, increasing strike pay, and stopping scab trucks en masse, among other tactics.

Says Lanna: "No one should take a pay cut at this company. It's not right. The workers don't have to go for this tentative agreement."

Milt Neidenberg, David Sole, Jerry Goldberg, Martha Grevatt and Alan Pollock contributed to this report.

OSHA slammed for low fines in worker deaths

By Dana Gilmartin

The U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee published a report entitled, "Discounting Death: OSHA's Failure to Punish Safety Violations That Kill Workers" (available at www.aflcio.org) on April 29. The report calls the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration's penalty system "flawed" due to low fines, which are further reduced in the settlement process, in cases where workers have died. The report is also highly critical of the low number of fatality cases referred to the U.S. Department of Justice for criminal prosecution.

At the release of the report, the committee's chairperson, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA), pointed out that companies fishing for tuna in the wrong waters of the South Pacific face more penalties than those that allow dangerous conditions that contribute to an employee's death. (Charlotte Observer, April 30) He stated: "If you improperly import an exotic bird, you can go to jail for two years. If you deal in counterfeit money, you're looking at 20 years. ... But if you gamble with the lives of your employees and one of them is killed,

you only risk six months in jail." (Industrial Safety & Hygiene News, April 30)

The report found that in 2007 the median penalty assessed by OSHA in a fatality case was \$3,675. "Workers' lives are obviously worth far more than that," said Kennedy. (Charlotte Observer, April 30)

Family members of workers who had been killed on the job testified before the committee on April 29. Donald Coit Smith's 22-year-old son was a mechanic's helper who was electrocuted while disconnecting wires from an electric motor at Sanderson Farms poultry plant in Bryan, Texas. The \$31,000 OSHA penalty was reduced to \$12,000 in a settlement, and Mr. Smith said that "mad doesn't begin to describe" how he felt. "He was left alone to do a job, no supervision. He did what he was told and he paid for it with his life." (Charlotte Observer, April 30)

Ron Hayes, who testified at the hearing about his son's death in a grain silo, told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch that current penalties are "not enough to deter." (ISHN, April 30)

Peg Seminario, AFL-CIO Director of Safety and Health, testified that for some groups of workers the rate of deaths on the job has gotten worse. The fatality rate

among Latin@ workers increased from 4.9 deaths per 100,000 workers in 2005 to 5.0 deaths per 100,000 workers in 2006—a rate that is 25 percent higher than that of the workforce as a whole. Of the 5,840 deaths from fatal occupational injuries in 2006, 990 were of Latin@ workers, the highest number ever reported to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Similarly, deaths among immigrant workers in 2006 reached a new high of 1,046 fatalities. In both cases, the increase was overwhelmingly due to higher numbers of deaths in the construction industry.

Seminario's testimony revealed that in 2006, there were significant increases in deaths from falls, hazardous substances, and fires and explosions. She pointed out that OSHA has a smaller staff now than it did in 1975, even though the size of the workforce has doubled. The result is that in the states covered by federal OSHA (as opposed to state OSHA plans), there is the capacity to inspect each workplace, on average, only once every 133 years. (www.aflcio.org)

Although there are compliance officers within OSHA who come from the labor movement or the worker safety and health movement, as well as others who investi-

gate fatality cases conscientiously and issue all appropriate citations, the system is set up in numerous ways so that companies that receive citations can appeal the penalty amount. An army of attorneys and consultants has sprung up whose specialty is shooting holes in OSHA citations to get them eliminated or reduced. In addition, not all workplace deaths are considered clear violations of OSHA standards, such as heat stroke fatalities.

Bills have been introduced to update OSHA penalties and criminal prosecutions, but introducing bills that never make it out of committee is not enough to turn back the assault on worker health and safety.

OSHA was formed as a result of the militancy of working people, by unions and occupational safety and health coalitions. Although OSHA in its present form is badly flawed, unions continue to successfully push it forward to set standards such as the regulations on hexavalent chromium, a carcinogenic, and the recent pressure to address workplaces with combustible dusts. With 16 workers dying every day due to injuries on the job, a stepped-up militancy is needed to fight this unnecessary slaughter. □

Anti-imperialist leader from India talks to Boston workers

By Frank Neisser
Boston

Workers in Boston had a unique opportunity here May 18 to share views with Manik Mukherjee, a veteran leader of working-class struggles from India. Mr. Mukherjee is the general secretary of the International Anti-Imperialist and People's Solidarity Coordinating Committee and vice president of the All India Anti-Imperialist Forum.

Mukherjee has been at the forefront of organizing support and solidarity for the people of Nandigram in West Bengal, India. Peasant women there have been on the front lines of resisting the forced acquisition of their lands, which their families have farmed for centuries, for the creation of a "special economic zone" (SEZ) for Dow Chemical and other multinational corporations. The people stopped the SEZ by digging up the roads and making the bridges impassable, but they faced multiple massacres and mass rapes by West Bengali state agents.

On his arrival in Boston, Mukherjee was greeted by a delegation including United Steelworkers Local 8751 President Franz Mendez, Ed Childs of UNITE-HERE Local 26, Bishop Filipe Teixeira OFSJC, members of the executive board of the Archdale Roslindale Coalition and members of the International Action Center.

His first meeting was with a group of about 20 leaders, organizers' stewards and rank-and-file members of USW Local 8751, the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, and the organizing staff of District Council 35, Painters and Allied Trades. Workers from Haiti, Cuba, Angola, Brazil and three different U.S. states attended—a workers' United Nations, as Tony Hernandez of DC 35 remarked in his opening comments.

Mukherjee described the impact of the 1,300 SEZs that have already been established throughout India and the organizing in West Bengal of agricultural laborers'



Manik Mukherjee, fourth from left, with Boston workers and activists.

peoples committees to oppose them. Mass meetings were held, explaining that the land to be acquired for the Dow Chemical hub was all arable land—the breadbasket of Calcutta—that had provided the livelihood of the people for centuries. Its takeover would lead to famine and massive unemployment. Existing factories and industrialization would be destroyed to make way for superexploitation, free from all labor laws and regulation as well as taxes.

The people of Nandigram, according to Mukherjee, said, "No! We will give our lives, but not our land." He recounted the battle of Nandigram, where police used torture, mass rape, burning down of houses and massacres, but were unable to defeat the people. The solidarity slogan of progressives throughout India became "My name, your name, our name is Nandigram!"

Mukherjee pointed to the need for worldwide solidarity and working-class unity to fight back against the SEZs and the multinational corporations.

Several school bus union leaders inquired whether Mukherjee was planning to visit Haiti. More than 80 percent of the members of Local 8751 are Haitian

immigrants. They expressed that Haiti, faced with U.N. occupying troops, mass starvation and the rising cost of food, was in need of the kind of militant struggle shown by the peasants of Nandigram. Mukherjee expressed keen interest in making such a trip, and the union leaders agreed to work to arrange it.

Mr. Mukherjee next went to the Charlestown Bus Yard to speak to unionized school bus drivers on their break. He gave a general description of the conditions of workers in India, where more than 90 percent are unorganized, where there is 40 percent unemployment, and where 36 percent live below the poverty line, surviving on one meal a day. He talked of massive layoffs, no jobs, loitering, begging and prostitution, and expressed the need for workers of the whole world to unite against the capitalists and bring an end to wage slavery.

Later, a reception was held for Mukherjee at Boston City Hall with African-American city councilors Chuck Turner and Charles Yancey, and a representative of Korean-American City Councilor Sam Yoon. The councilors were deeply moved by his account of the role

of multinational corporations and SEZs throughout India. Councilor Turner proposed drafting a City Council Resolution denouncing special economic zones in general and Dow Chemical specifically for their criminal role in Nandigram. This resolution could become a model for other progressive city councils to demonstrate their solidarity and aid in building a movement to stop this global injustice.

Finally, Mukherjee addressed an International Action Center forum. Bishop Teixeira described the significant, 3,000-strong immigrant rights demonstration on May Day in Everett, East Boston and Chelsea. Miya Campbell discussed peoples' resistance to the racist acquittal of the cops who killed Sean Bell.

Steve Kirschbaum, who was part of an IAC delegation to Nandigram last November led by former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, spoke of the 30,000-strong anti-imperialist demonstration that greeted their delegation in Calcutta, and how the SEZs are a worldwide strategy at the forefront of imperialism's global war against the workers.

Mr. Mukherjee said Nandigram represented the type of class struggle needed to push back capitalism and move toward revolution. Organizing mass struggle and class struggle, as in Nandigram, provides the opportunity to explain the need for revolution. He gave a class analysis of the current stage of Indian development as a developing imperialist power, discussing the impact of the collapse of the Soviet Union on the global working-class struggle and the need for all anti-imperialist forces to unite and renew the worldwide struggle against imperialist war.

Jonathan Regis demonstrated the new Nandigram Solidarity Web site, www.nandigramsolidarity.us, which includes videos and photos about Nandigram, an online interactive petition demanding justice for Nandigram, and other ways to get involved in supporting the struggle. □

Indian Marxist says

Globalization means imperialist attack on working poor

By John Catalinotto
New York

Manik Mukherjee, the vice president of the All-India Anti-Imperialist Forum and a senior leader of the Socialist Unity Center of India, spoke at a New York City Workers World Forum May 16 along with WWP Secretariat members Fred Goldstein and Teresa Gutierrez, who had both just returned from a conference on Marxism in Havana, Cuba. The following are excerpts from Mukherjee's talk and from an interview with him made that same day.

Globalization is a nice-sounding word that means an imperialist attack on the workers and peasants. And imperialism is very bad for the common people. The workers, peasants and agricultural workers are under attack from imperialism on all fronts.

This attack is spearheaded through the use of what are called Special Economic Zones, SEZs. The workers call them "Special Exploitation Zones." There are 1,300 SEZs planned for India. We find that many multinational companies are being

invited to India by the central government and by the state government—where I am, Kolkata (Calcutta), this means the West Bengal government.

In a SEZ, the government will give the multinational the land and the company will not have to pay rent. It will also get water and electricity free. The West Bengal government says that globalization and SEZs will bring industry to the state but we have seen that no industry is established. We have a phrase for this: "jobless growth." Even where production expands there is a net loss of jobs. These are all capital-intensive industries without much scope or opportunities for jobs for the common people.

In a SEZ, the existing labor laws won't be operational. The owners can fire workers at will. The maximum hours workers can work will not be maintained; they may be forced to work 12 to 14 hours a day. Everything will be under the control of the owner.

Poor grow poorer, rich become billionaires

They say they are expanding industry but we know they are taking over



Sara Flounders, Manik Mukherjee and Ramsey Clark.

the lands and they will use them for real estate development. The moneyed people of India will take over and build homes and the wealthy 10 percent of Indians will live there. The other 90 percent of Indians will just get poorer.

Right now 36 percent of Indians live below the poverty level, which means they get less than two full meals a day. Their purchasing power is so low that their very existence is at stake. They suffer unthinkable poverty.

On the other hand, four of the richest people in the world are Indians, including Lakshmi Mittal, owner of Mittal Steel,

the biggest steel company in the world. [According to Forbes' 2008 list of billionaires, numbers 4, 5, 6 and 8 are Indians—JC] It is these superrich and others like them who gain from globalization and SEZs, in conspiracy with the state and central governments.

They allow the multinationals to penetrate India to exploit Indian labor and resources, and in turn get access to markets in Japan and in Latin America. All capitalist and imperialist countries are going through an acute economic crisis of overproduction and underutilized capi-

Continued on page 11

As Pakistani people push back

Pentagon moves torture general to back bench

By Deirdre Griswold

The Bush administration and the Pentagon are leaning heavily on Pakistan to "pacify" regions along its border with Afghanistan and to allow even more aggressive U.S. military operations there.

It is all done in the name of the fraudulent "war on terror"—a cover story to excuse the imperialist atrocities that are being committed daily against the people of the region in order to extend the geo-strategic dominance of U.S. big business over this resource-rich area.

However, the people of Pakistan are resisting being dragged further into the role of U.S. surrogates in Washington's war to control Afghanistan. As much as the U.S. pushes, they continue to push back.

A recent example of this came when the Pentagon had to quietly withdraw the appointment of Maj. Gen. Jay Hood to be its top military envoy to Pakistan. Hood was previously commander of the notorious U.S. prison camp at Guantánamo. Some 60 Pakistanis have been through that hellhole and returned to tell of the tortures and insults they received there. For Hood to become the Pentagon's top dog in Pakistan was more than just a symbolic threat. So when word of his pending appointment got out, a firestorm of protest swept Pakistan, causing the Pentagon to switch gears.

This was followed, however, by a blustering speech by Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte in Washington saying the U.S. would "not be satisfied" until Pakistan had asserted its control over the border areas. Negroponte, notorious for his murderous role in Central America in the 1980s, has personally taken charge of U.S. policy towards Pakistan. When Pakistani dictator Gen. Pervez Musharraf was under strong pressure to resign last fall, it was Negroponte who called him "indispensable," indicating Washington's determination to keep the dictator in power.

To illustrate Negroponte's threat, the CIA on May 14 launched two Predator missiles to strike a house in the village of Damadola in the tribal region of Bajaur, killing at least 15 people, according to Pakistani officials. It was at least the fourth time this year that the CIA had used

aerial drones to launch missile strikes on Pakistani villages. No warning was given to the Pakistani government. (Wall Street Journal, May 20) As usual in their attacks throughout the Middle East, the imperialists claimed their target was "terrorists."

The government in Washington has no respect for international law or the sovereignty of other nations. It acts as though it has a free hand to rain down death and destruction anywhere in the world. And so it is using brute force to try to undo the gains made last year by the people of Pakistan in their struggle against Musharraf. He is the latest in a long line of Pakistani military dictators supported by Washington, which has handed over \$10 billion in military aid to his regime since 2000.

For months last year, the people of

Pakistan had put their bodies on the line, calling for Musharraf to go. There were thousands of demonstrations and strikes for democracy and against martial law. Scores of people were killed by the military and police; many thousands were arrested, among them thousands of lawyers and judges who demanded the reinstatement of the chief justice of the Supreme Court. He had been removed by Musharraf for challenging the legality of the general's plan to get himself "re-elected" president while still head of the armed forces—a violation of Pakistan's Constitution. The whole judicial system was in an uproar.

Parliamentary elections came next. Huge crowds attended the opposition rallies, despite threats of violence. Right after one of them, the leader of the Pakistan People's Party, Benazir Bhutto, was assassinated.

Musharraf's party was routed in the polls, but he still remains president based on an illegal election last fall that was boycotted by the opposition. And the struggle over the Supreme Court goes on, even though the opposition parties now control the government and are trying to cut down the powers of the president.

The new government has been negotiating a peace deal with the local leaders of the semiautonomous areas known as the tribal regions. The U.S. is virulently opposed to such a peace. However, its political influence in the area is waning fast. As a paper in the United Arab Emirates wrote recently, "[M]ost Pakistani politicians are desperate to distance themselves from Washington as any whiff of U.S. association is toxic." (The National, May 17) □

Deir Yassin survivors recount terror, honor resistance



Audience at April 26 meeting in New Brunswick, N.J.

Special to Workers World New Brunswick, N.J.

Continuing Palestinian resistance, 60 years after Al-Nakba, or "the great catastrophe," was honored at a special meeting April 13 hosted by New Jersey Solidarity—Activists for the Liberation of Palestine at the New Brunswick Public Library.

Students, community members and solidarity activists heard from a panel that included two Nakba survivors, who shared their memories of the 1948 Zionist terror campaign that forced 750,000 Palestinians to flee their homes. The resulting massacres and mass land theft, aided and abetted by U.S. and British imperialism, accompanied the creation of the state of Israel.

Mohammad Awadallah, an NJS organizer and Palestinian student, opened the discussion by answering several myths about Palestine and Israel that will be familiar to anyone bombarded by corporate media spins.

Far from being "a land without a people," as one myth goes, Palestine's displaced people are today the largest refugee populace in the world—nearly 7 million. Awadallah answered charges of "terrorism" against Palestinian freedom fighters by highlighting examples from the decades long, state-sponsored terrorism of Tel Aviv and Washington. And Israel is not "the Middle East's only democracy," he explained, but an apartheid state built on inequality and racism.

Dawud Assad, who lived through the Nakba as a teenager and survived the bloody Deir Yassin massacre, told how he recently visited his home village for the first time since 1948, only after obtaining

special permission from the Israeli Minister of Health. Assad barely escaped the Zionist death squads who killed his grandmother and 2-year-old brother. His younger sister hid between their bodies for hours and was later taken captive, while his mother, captured in another house, was refused the right to try to save her young son, who may still have been alive. In all, 27 of Assad's relatives were killed at Deir Yassin.

Assad returned home to conduct research on the massacre for a forthcoming book. He said the common figure of 250 dead was based on a random number chosen by a British military officer. His review of records and personal interviews shows that 100 villagers were slaughtered along with three foreigners: a schoolteacher who stayed to treat the wounded, and a baker and his son who were cooked alive in their oven. Survivors were paraded

Continued on page 9



PHILADELPHIA.

Rally counters pro-Zionist affair

Chants of "Occupation is a Crime! Free Palestine!" signs and Palestinian flags, and a thousand black balloons confronted participants of the official "Israel at 60" celebration May 18 in Philadelphia. The cloud of black balloons was released into the sky to mark the 60th anniversary of Palestinian dispossession, when more than half the native population was expelled from Palestine, more than 530 villages destroyed, and the history and heritage of an ancient people were stolen to make way for the creation of Israel.

The event concluded 60 days of activities by the Philadelphia Al-Nakba Coalition, which featured dozens of film showings, forums and speakers to raise awareness of Palestinian history, current struggles in Gaza and the West Bank against continuing Israeli violence and expanding of settlements, and the critical role of the U.S. in supporting the outlaw state of Israel.

—Report and photo by Joe Piette

Massive French demonstrations protest education job cuts

By G. Dunkel

French President Nicolas Sarkozy and Xavier Darcos, his minister of education, seem intent on picking a fight with the French unions.

Education in France is a national responsibility. Sarkozy and Darcos say it is essential for France to reform its education system and improve its results.

To do this, they want to cut the number of teachers by 12,000 in the 2008-2009 school year, after dismissing more than 8,000 in this school year. This will mean bigger classes and fewer electives offered in secondary schools, and less help offered to students who are having trouble getting an education.

On May 15, 200,000 to 300,000 people—mainly teachers, students and public

employees who are also facing cutbacks—took to the streets throughout France in a one-day strike, called by a coalition of union confederations, to oppose these job cuts. According to figures from the FSU union, which is supported by a majority of elementary and secondary teachers, nearly half of the more than 800,000 teachers in France were on strike.

There were 60,000 people in the streets of Paris, while 30,000 came out in Marseilles. Significant demonstrations were also held in Brest, Quimper, Rennes, Grenoble, Pau, Bayonne, Lyon, Lille, Bordeaux, Nice and Rouen. In some of the smaller cities, according to a report in *L'Humanité*, the riot cops harshly harassed protesters but no significant

Continued on page 8

Sudan maintains defiance amid Western destabilization campaigns

Attacks by Darfur rebels spark crisis with Chad

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

A political and military accord signed between the Sudanese government of Omar al-Beshir and Chadian President Idriss Deby in January was dissolved in the aftermath of an attack by a Darfur rebel group on May 10. The so-called Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) carried out an assault in Omdurman resulting in the deaths of approximately 200 people.

Although this attack against one of the major cities in Sudan has focused attention on whether the neighboring Western-backed and oil-rich Chadian regime of Idriss Deby was behind the act of aggression, the transnational oil companies with their major players based in the United States have formidable reasons for wanting to see the government in Sudan overthrown.

For over a decade now, U.S.-based transnational firms have not been allowed to exploit the rapidly emerging oil industry in Sudan; they have been barred from extracting oil there. Some 80 percent of the oil concessions in the country are granted to partnerships between the Sudanese government and the People's Republic of China. Other concessions are held by local interests in partnership with Arab and Middle Eastern nations.

This economic decision on the part of Sudan results from a foreign policy orientation that is independent of U.S. military efforts in Africa and the Middle East. In 1990-91, the Sudanese government refused to support the Pentagon's war against Iraq over the issue of former President Saddam Hussein's intervention in Kuwait, nor has it supported the current occupation of Iraq that began in 2003.

Chad under pressure from Western influence

Consequently, when looking at the hostile U.S. State Department posture toward Sudan, the oil factor must be taken into consideration.

Chad is also a large producer of oil. However, the government of Idriss Deby has close ties both politically and economically to Chad's former colonial ruler, France, which has tilted toward the U.S. under President Nicolas Sarkozy. The French military, which has a permanent presence in Chad, recently stepped in to shore up the Deby government. Otherwise, an attempt to unseat him by the United Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD) would have been victorious.

In response, the Deby government released a group of French nationals who had posed as a charitable organization calling itself Zoe's Ark and allowed them to return to France. They had been tried and convicted of attempting to kidnap dozens of Chadian children in order to sell them to people in Europe.

The French and other Europeans in Zoe's Ark were questioned after their arrest. They stated that their motivation was to transport children from the Darfur region of Sudan, which is currently undergoing civil conflict, to adoption agencies in France so they could permanently be placed in homes in Europe. Yet, according to news reports emanating from Chad, most of the children were not from Darfur and had been taken in violation of the laws of Chad governing adoption.

The uncovering of this plot to kidnap

African children in Chad sparked outrage inside the country and led thousands of people to protest the actions of Zoe's Ark. Nonetheless, the government in Chad was beholden to France because of its precarious political position and the relative strength of the UFDD opposition forces.

Behind the political campaign against Sudan

The Sudanese region of Darfur is located in the west of the country bordering Chad. The government of Omar al-Bashir has accused Chadian President Deby of supporting the rebel movements in Darfur. The Darfur rebels have gained the sympathy and support of various right-wing political interests in the U.S. and Europe. Some of these groups have sponsored documentary films, photographic displays, rallies and even legislation which encourage the intervention of the U.S. and other imperialist countries in the internal affairs of Sudan.

Just last year a new documentary film entitled "The Devil on Horseback" premiered throughout the U.S. It was based on photographs taken by a U.S. Marine captain who had visited Sudan as a military consultant to the African Union, which has had an observer mission in the country for several years.

This film portrays the civil conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan as a systematic campaign by the el-Bashir government to carry out genocide against the inhabitants of this region. It does not mention the historical legacy of British colonialism, which systematically divided Sudan so that the country could be subjugated for over half a century. The origins of both the civil wars in the south of the country and in Darfur in the west are rooted in the policy of divide-and-rule imposed by Britain when it defeated the early resistance movements during the late 19th century.

The documentary highlights the suffering of the people in Darfur in an effort to provoke a public outcry in the U.S. and a demand for immediate military intervention to weaken the authority of the central government in Sudan and establish a permanent Western presence in the Darfur region of Sudan bordering Chad.

Another manifestation of the so-called "Save Darfur Movement" is the drafting and promotion of legislation on a local and state level that seeks to divest pension funds from corporations that engage in commerce with Sudan. Since there is limited trade between the U.S. and Sudan, such legislation is clearly promoted for its propaganda value. It advances the notion that the government should be changed based upon allegations of genocide against the people of Darfur.

In addition, these right-wing elements falsely characterize the civil conflict in Darfur as a racial one, between what they describe as Arabs in the north and Blacks in the Darfur region. This attempt to racialize the conflict is deliberately aimed at discouraging African Americans and anti-racist constituencies in the U.S. from organizing any effort to defend the Sudanese people from Western military intervention.

Most historians of Sudan say there are no fundamental racial divisions between the peoples of this vast central African country. The majority of people in both the northern region, where the capital is located, and Darfur in the west are

Muslims. For centuries the various ethnic groups have intermarried and shared cultural and religious traits.

Michigan lawmakers seek divestment

In the state of Michigan, legislation was introduced during 2007 that would mandate the immediate withdrawal of public pension funds from businesses that conduct trade with both Sudan and Iran, as well as impose sanctions against any company with Sudanese investors or stakeholders.

The twin bills, entitled "Public Retirement Systems: Divestiture of Investments Related to Sudan and Iran" (House Bills 4903 and 4854), were sponsored by Rep. Alma Wheeler Smith, a Democrat, and Marty Knollenberg, a Republican. Smith's bill is against Sudan and Knollenberg's against Iran.

A legislative analysis issued by the Michigan House Fiscal Agency describes the bills as "amending the Public Employee Retirement System Investment Act (MCL 38.1133c and 1133d) to require a retirement system to engage in a number of activities related to assets invested in companies with certain kinds of business relationships with Sudan and Iran. The bill ultimately could, under certain condition, require a retirement system to sell, redeem, divest, or withdraw all publicly traded securities of a company actively involved with the Sudan or Iran over a 15-month period."

This same document points out that the bill "would apply to retirement systems under the Michigan Legislative Retirement Act, the State Police Retirement Act, the Judges Retirement Act, the State Employees Retirement Act, and the Public School Employees Retirement Act." These public pension systems hold billions of dollars in employee contributions, which are heavily invested in private corporations.

Although these bills have not yet been passed by the state Senate, and therefore

are not law, they still represent a hostile act against the peoples of Sudan and Iran. They seek to create an atmosphere where people in the U.S. could be influenced and convinced to support a military interventionist policy toward both Sudan and Iran, two oil-producing nations targeted by the Bush administration for regime change.

The Sudanese people must be able to decide their own future.

It is important that anti-imperialist forces in the U.S. and internationally understand what is at stake in Sudan. The Bush administration, as well as other previous U.S. leaders, has coveted the oil, other minerals and agricultural wealth of this African country. This imperative drives the propaganda and other acts of military aggression against not only Sudan but many other geopolitical regions throughout Africa and the so-called developing world.

The people of Sudan must be allowed to resolve their own internal struggles aimed at forging unity and national development. It should not be up to the U.S. or the former colonial power of Britain to set the moral tone for what is acceptable in Sudan.

Sudan has a tremendous history of maintaining independence through both political and military efforts. The people heroically fought the British during the 19th century before eventually falling under the yoke of colonialism for many decades.

Today the Sudanese people are resisting imperialist efforts to topple their government, seize and exploit the natural resources of the country, and place Western military forces in the Darfur region—which would serve as a buffer zone between French imperialist influence in Chad and an encroaching U.S. and British destabilization campaign in the rest of the country. People who oppose imperialism in all its shapes and forms must support the Sudanese in their struggle against political domination and economic exploitation. □

Massive French demonstrations

Continued from page 7

incident was reported.

To blunt the effectiveness of the strikes which the teachers, with major support from students and their parents, are holding, Sarkozy is insisting that "a minimum level of service" be provided everywhere in France, using the money the state saves by not paying the striking teachers.

On the left in France, the more radical elements see the "minimum level of service" as an attack on the constitutional right to strike, while more moderate elements see an unconstitutional mandate on local communities.

The FSU held a nationwide demonstration in Paris on May 18 to kick off a week of protests, which is scheduled to culminate in massive demonstrations on May 22. According to the union, about 45,000 people marched behind a banner that read, "Everyone should succeed! Struggle against inequality!"

FSU General Secretary Gérard Aschieri, who is the son of Italian immigrants, released a statement pointing out that Sarkozy has not taken any real steps to bargain with the unions but has "crossed a veritable red line" in attempting to limit

the right to strike.

Aschieri went on to say: "While he [Sarkozy] affirms the necessity of improving education, he proposes no solutions to the concrete problems which confront our education system. That is not how, for example, we solve the question of getting every student to succeed, of fighting against inequality, of improving our profession. ... He refuses the dialog indispensable not only for avoiding conflicts but also for providing new morale in public service." (actu.fsu.fr)

The French magazine *Le Nouvel Observateur* published a roundup of the statements of the leaders of the major unions May 16. They all said they were ready and preferred to talk, but that if the government wanted a confrontation they were not going to back away from one.

While the demonstrations were focused on education and public service, a strong contingent of undocumented workers marched May 15 behind a banner that read "Legalization for all workers without papers! Equal rights for French and immigrant workers!" This contingent also participated in a May 10 Paris march marking the abolition of slavery in France and opposing current discrimination. □

While U.S. education falters, Venezuela's thrives

Protest condemns U.S. funding of counterrevolutionary student

By Jaimeson Champion
New York

Dozens of demonstrators gathered outside the Waldorf-Astoria hotel in New York City on May 15th to protest the presentation of the Milton Friedman Prize to Yon Goichochea. Inside, the leader of a counterrevolutionary Venezuelan student group received the award at a lavish \$500-a-plate banquet sponsored by The Cato Institute, a right-wing think tank.

The prize—named after the founding father of neoliberal economic policy and economic advisor to Chile's fascist dictator Augusto Pinochet—is a \$500,000 award given to individuals who promote the interests of U.S. imperialism.

The protest outside the hotel was organized by the Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle, and included supporters and allies of the Bolivarian Revolution from numerous organizations.

Speakers at the demonstration asserted that Goichochea did not represent Venezuelan students, and that he would use the award money to further fund attacks aimed at destabilizing the presidency of Hugo Chávez. They said Goichochea, acting as a puppet for U.S. imperial interests, seeks to reverse the tremendous gains achieved by the Bolivarian Revolution in the area of education.

Demonstrators also contended that The Cato Institute is interfering in Venezuelan affairs by attempting to fund the Venezuelan opposition movement.

In the past year, Goichochea has been heralded by groups such as The Cato Institute and pundits in the corporate press as a peaceful organizer for "liberty and freedom of speech."

But the reality is that Goichochea is a violence-provoking, 23-year-old student

mouthpiece for the deposed Venezuelan oligarchy. He is a privileged son of the old elite. He advocates a return to the pre-Bolivarian Revolution days, when education was a commodity reserved only for the wealthy.

As a student, Goichochea attended the private Catholic University. One of the few remaining private universities in Venezuela, Catholic University has a long been a training ground for the privileged class.

The student demonstrations which Goichochea has organized have been attended almost entirely by wealthy students from the private universities. These demonstrations by the children of the oligarchy have received enormous amounts of news coverage, though the participants only represent a minute fraction of the total Venezuelan student body.

The demonstrations Goichochea and his pro-imperialist stooges have organized have been violent and destructive. Goichochea and his supporters have trashed publicly funded Bolivarian educational facilities.

In one 2007 demonstration, Goichochea supporters targeted the Caracas School of Social Work. They trashed the campus, setting the building on fire and trapping some social work students inside. Goichochea and his supporters targeted the School of Social Work because the social work students overwhelmingly support Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution.

Far from championing "freedom of speech," Goichochea and his support-

ers have sought to violently intimidate and silence students who support the Bolivarian Revolution.

Education in Venezuela and the U.S.: A study in contrasts

Despite Goichochea's efforts, the Bolivarian Revolution has ushered in a new era in Venezuelan education that has led to increased access to education for all sectors of Venezuelan society.

Chávez has implemented a massive increase in social spending, particularly in education and health care. Social spending as a percentage of GDP has increased from 8.2 percent in 1998 to 13.6 percent in 2006. (source: Weisbrot, Center for Economic Policy Research)

"Bolivarian missions" such as Mission Robinson and Mission Ribas, which are programs dedicated to improving social conditions in Venezuela, have helped increase literacy and arithmetic skills in poorer urban and rural areas across the country.

Another Bolivarian mission, Mission Sucre, provides free university education to any Venezuelan, regardless of income or resources. Mission Sucre's official statement of purpose is "to guarantee access to university education for all undergraduates and to transform the condition of those excluded from the subsystem of higher education." Through Mission Sucre, hundreds of thousands of Venezuelan students who had previously lacked access to higher education have been able to obtain a university degree.

The achievements of the Bolivarian Revolution in the area of education highlight the great benefits of socializing production to satisfy human needs instead of corporate greed. The Bolivarian education programs are funded in large part through revenues from the nationalized petroleum industry. PDVSA, the Venezuelan state oil company, funds a large proportion of the budgets for Missions Robinson, Ribas and Sucre.

Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution are using Venezuela's productive capacity to improve the quality of life for all Venezuelans. Rather than enriching foreign corporations, the Bolivarian Revolution is instead investing in the educational enrichment of Venezuelan students.

The Bolivarian Revolution's focus on increasing access to education stands in stark contrast to the focus of the educational system in the U.S. While an increasing number of students in Venezuela are gaining access to higher education, the opposite is true in the U.S.

Tuition rates in the U.S. are skyrocketing. With debt loads of U.S. students, upon graduation, now averaging more than \$20,000, higher education is becoming increasingly unaffordable for most working-class students. Many working-class students in the U.S. are forced into the armed forces in order to afford higher education. A free university education, as is provided in Venezuela, would be a welcome reprieve for millions of U.S. students potentially facing a life of indebtedness.

The Bolivarian Revolution is daily proving that there is a clear-cut alternative to the violence, greed and destruction wrought by capitalism and U.S. imperialism. The gains achieved by the Bolivarian Revolution in areas such as education, housing and health care provide examples to the world of the potential benefits of socialism. The hundreds of thousands of recent college graduates in Venezuela who attended school through Mission Sucre are testament to the reality that a better system is possible. □

China mobilizes to save lives & rebuild

Continued from page 1

1906 San Francisco earthquake, the most destructive ever to shake the U.S. (excluding Alaska and Hawaii), was 7.8 and took about 3,000 lives.

Contrast with handling of Katrina

The contrast between the handling of this earthquake and the flooding of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina is stark. China is still a developing country. There was no advance warning of a natural disaster on the scale of this quake. Yet it was able to mobilize its resources within hours to provide relief to the survivors.

In the wealthy United States, the Army Corps of Engineers itself in a report a year earlier had predicted the levees above New Orleans could fail and the city be inundated if it were hit by a strong hurricane. Yet little had been done. As Katrina came barreling through the Gulf, meteorologists informed the federal government and "homeland security" of the danger. They were told all necessary preparations had been made.

After disaster struck, the levees broke and 80 percent of the city flooded. A million people had evacuated the area based on the storm warnings, but many poor and elderly remained.

Some 25,000, the majority African-American, took refuge at the Astrodome only to run out of water, food and working sanitary facilities as days went by and temperatures soared. Others languished on elevated highways and bridges, or

were trapped in their attics as their homes flooded. At least 1,500 people died from drowning, dehydration and lack of food or even a raft to get to higher ground. Corpses remained in the fetid water for weeks.

It took President George W. Bush two days after the levees broke to cut short his vacation in Crawford, Texas, and fly over the area in a helicopter. Vice President Dick Cheney took four days to come back from his vacation, even as a horrified world watched the tragedy unfold hour by hour.

Photos of the troops dispatched to New Orleans show them patrolling the city armed with assault rifles and handguns to stop "looters"—often just people seeking food and water after days without services.

In the many pictures showing the disaster in China to be found at Yahoo's photo gallery, taken by a wide variety of sources, none of the soldiers or other rescue workers is armed.

One photo from China shows a rescue worker planting China's red flag atop a heap of rubble as his exhausted comrades sit below. It is a reminder that, despite the inroads of capitalism in their market economy, millions of Chinese feel united behind a cause—the betterment of all their people—that inspired a socialist revolution in their country just two generations ago.

As a time of great trial for the world draws nearer with the consequences of global warming, it is just this spirit of collective action that will be needed everywhere. □

Cuba's role in promoting Haiti's literacy

Cuba is actively helping Haiti develop a literacy project. Carol Joseph, Haiti's secretary of state for literacy, went to Cité Soleil at the end of April to participate in the graduation ceremony for 1,112 participants of the Dwouya literacy program. He gave each a certificate and reminded them that now they can go further in developing their skills.

Cité Soleil is one of the poorest communities in Haiti.

Cuba not only provided technicians who trained their Haitian counterparts in Cuba's "Yes I can" method for teaching literacy, it also provided television sets that ran off solar panels for the programs. Joseph evaluated Cuba's contribution at \$7.7 million and said that it respected Haiti's dignity.

According to *Haiti-Liberté* (May 7), militants in Cité Soleil feel that the \$20 million in aid the U.S. has provided was squandered and wasted.

—G. Dunkel

Deir Yassin survivors

Continued from page 7

through the streets of Jerusalem, where they were spit upon.

"The Nakba didn't end in 1948," said Charlotte Kates, an organizer of New Jersey Solidarity and Al-Awda New York. She noted the central role of U.S. imperialism in the occupation of Palestine, including the rush of both Democratic and Republican presidential candidates to be the most enthusiastic defenders of the Israeli settler state.

Kates urged the audience to "educate our communities, friends and co-workers" about the ongoing catastrophe against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, Palestine 1948 and in refugee camps, carried out with U.S. weapons and tax dollars as a means to further U.S. domination in the Middle East.

Awni Attiya, a Deir Yassin survivor and uncle of Assad, recounted his memories of the Nakba. He recalled how the Arab village of Deir Yassin and surrounding Jewish villages had lived in harmony and even signed a peace treaty in the months before the massacre. "The British occupation opened the door" to the Zionist death squads, Attiya explained.

The meeting was chaired by Greg Butterfield of New Jersey Solidarity and the International Action Center. □

Long live the legacy of Ka Bel!

Workers World Party sends our deepest condolences to the family, friends and comrades of the great Filipino labor leader and freedom fighter, Crispin Beltran, lovingly known as Ka Bel.

We received with great sadness the news that Ka Bel had died on May 20th after a long and fruitful life.

Comrades of our party had occasion in 2006 to meet with and visit Ka Bel in the hospital where he was being held as a political prisoner at the time. Our comrades reported that it was a real honor to meet him and were deeply and greatly moved by his tremendous knowledge, his deep understanding of Marxism and his revolutionary optimism. He was full of joy, but most important, full of love for the struggle of his people. And he was deeply concerned as well with the worldwide struggle against imperialism.

Despite years of imprisonment, repression and torture, Ka Bel was fiercely determined to struggle on. He had the utmost confidence that one day the Filipino people would be victorious.

The name Ka Bel is, unfortunately, not well known in the U.S., because the struggle of the Filipino people for their liberation is hidden from the pages of the bourgeois press. But it is a glorious and rich struggle, one that Ka Bel symbolized so well. As was so aptly put, "Ka Bel was a legend in his own time."

Let us take advantage of the death of this great revolutionary leader to build the movement in solidarity with the Filipino people. A special appeal should be made to



Dianne Mathiowetz, Ka Bel & Teresa Gutierrez

the youth of this country, the U.S., so they may learn the history of Ka Bel and build on his legacy. Ka Bel was a revolutionary, a communist who dedicated his entire life to the liberation of his people, and his work should be known by all. His example should be studied and followed by people around the world, by anyone struggling against the yoke of imperialism.

Our party is confident that the struggle Ka Bel dedicated his life to will be victorious. The Filipino people will be free. They will one day build a new society and the name of Ka Bel will ring proudly through his land.

Long live the Legacy of Ka Bel!

U.S. imperialism out of the Philippines!

Victory to the Filipino people!

Long live international solidarity!

From the National Committee of Workers World Party

Defend Obama against racist attacks

A movement of the oppressed Black masses has propelled Sen. Barack Obama forward, with white workers and youth also clamoring over the possibility of having him as president.

This has of course revealed the rabid racism inherent in the U.S., which is, after all, a society built from the genocide of Indigenous people, the enslavement of African people, theft of Puerto Rico, Hawaii, more than half of Mexico and other lands.

The racist attacks against Obama keep coming, from the Democrats, the Republicans, and, of course, the ultra-right.

Early on Geraldine Ferraro suggested that Obama has only gotten so far because of his race. Tell that to the nearly one million Black women and men locked up in prisons, or the millions that live below poverty in substandard housing, where their children attend substandard schools in neighborhoods occupied by police. Tell that to the family of Sean Bell or to Hurricane Katrina survivors.

Recently, former 2008 Republican candidate Mike Huckabee, speaking at the National Rifle Association convention, joked after a loud bang: "That was Barack Obama, he just tripped off a chair. ... Somebody aimed a gun at him and he dove for the floor." Such a threat is no joke.

There have been the attacks on Rev Wright, which were, as Wright correctly put it, attacks against the self-determination of Black people, Black liberation theology and Wright's righteous and on time views regarding racism and U.S. imperialism.

John Hagee is a certified racist, sexist, homophobic preacher and McCain supporter, but he rarely has been dredged up by the capitalist media. This is Hagee on Hurricane Katrina: "I believe that New Orleans had a level of sin that was offensive to God and they were recipients of the judgment of God for that." (mediamatters.org) And, on women: "Do you know the difference between a

woman with PMS and a snarling Doberman pinscher? The answer is lipstick. Do you know the difference between a terrorist and a woman with PMS? You can negotiate with a terrorist." (worldnetdaily.com, May 9)

Where is the furor?

Obama is still an imperialist politician; that won't change. However, bourgeois elections are still as Engels described them to be in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*: "a gauge of the maturity of the working class" that "cannot and never will be anything more in the present-day state." Engels was speaking specifically of universal suffrage, which was a gain won through struggles of oppressed people, and which should be everyone's right. However, bourgeois politics can't be counted on to produce profound, revolutionary change from one system to another. That can only come through struggle.

Yet—even taking into account the effectiveness of capitalist media—how bourgeois politicians present themselves and their programs, and the attention paid to the elections by workers and the oppressed, can illustrate the prospects of struggle and the level of socialization of workers and the oppressed. What these elections show is a certain level of socialization of white workers. Despite the racist attacks and the general criminalization of Black youth in the media and by the state, that a Black man has been thrust to the forefront of the political arena and may be president speaks to the willingness of white workers to see beyond the social backsliding that is occurring across the country.

The attacks will increase, especially as the national election draws nearer, and they should be fought at every turn. It is not about Obama's program, which is an imperialist program indeed; but even revolutionaries should see that there is a movement of oppressed people behind the Obama campaign and defend the right of Black people to have a Black president. □

THE PRISONERS OF ATTICA:

Unity & courage vs.

Editor's note: Workers World is in its 50th year of publication. Throughout the year, we will share with our readers some of the paper's content over the past half century. Below is a reprint from a 1971 article on the massacre ending the most significant of many prison rebellions in a period in U.S. history when many Black, Latin@ and Native prisoners were conscious of their role in their peoples' struggles for national liberation, when some were imprisoned political leaders of groups like the Black Panthers, and where even some white prisoners were political activists jailed for direct action against war and racism. On Aug. 21, 1971, Panther George Jackson was executed by guards in San Quentin state Prison, Calif. On Sept. 9, the Attica rebellion began. Prisoner Solidarity Committee leader Tom Soto, a contributor to Workers World newspaper, was among those few invited by the prisoners to witness the negotiations but who were unable stop the state's vicious attack. For comparison, today's population is incarcerated at over five times the 1971 rate.

ATTICA, N.Y., Sept. 14—Billionaire Governor Rockefeller yesterday ended with a massacre the greatest prisoners' rebellion in modern times. Reflecting the blatant racism that has created the concentration camp system in this country and has led to prisoners' revolts nationwide, a guard held hostage by rebelling inmates at Attica State Prison emerged from the prison's main gate free and unharmed with a violent shout of "White power!" Behind him, within the prison walls, spewed a carnage of blood and bodies, including 28 dead prisoners and hundreds wounded, some fatally. Also dead were nine guards held as hostages, all, according to later autopsies, killed by bullets as 1,000 state troopers, sheriffs' deputies and prison guards armed with shotguns, automatic weapons and nausea gas stormed the prison with guns blazing.

"It resembled the aftermath of a war," some observers said, and they were right. Attica, with its prisoner population 85 percent Black and Puerto Rican and the high political consciousness and clenched fist salutes displayed during the rebellion,

Globalization: Imperialist attack on working poor

Continued from page 6

tal—they are unable to invest.

Indian capitalism has also acquired imperialist characteristics and is exporting capital to other parts of the world, buying up industry, even major steel companies. Indian capital is buying even cheaper labor in Nepal and Bangladesh, which have become economic colonies of India.

In turn, India's foreign policy is no longer nonaligned. India tilts toward the U.S. and Israel and is a large purchaser of Israeli-made arms.

With land being taken away from peasants for use in SEZs, more and more village people are coming into the cities. Since there are no jobs, there is a big increase in begging and prostitution. It is very painful that women are forced into prostitution to feed their children.

Many workers and peasants are committing suicide—no fewer than 2,000 in the last year—when they get into intractable debt that they can never pay back.

Nandigram means fight back

Dow Chemical was invited into Nandigram in West Bengal to establish a chemical hub. Its plants threatened to pollute the atmosphere and a nearby river. They started grabbing all the fertile land in the SEZ. The peasants and agricultural workers will lose the use of the land, which means they lose everything.

But Nandigram turned out to be something else. It was an example of tremendous resistance. People's committees formed. SUCI, my party, was very active in Nandigram. The state government of West Bengal intervened with severe repression. But the people kept fighting back and they had a victory. This has set an example for peasants and agricultural workers all over India. (See WW, Dec. 14, 2007, "Nandigram says 'No!' to Dow's chemical hub")

West Bengal is where not only bour-

geois parties but also a social democratic party—called the Communist Party of India-Marxist but which we in SUCI have considered a social-democratic party since 1948—control the state. And they have been exposed in Nandigram for using state repression to serve capitalist interests.

SUCI is trying to unite with other forces, for example, the Naxalites and other Marxist Leninist organizations and even a part of the Congress Party called the TMC, to protest against SEZs and to develop the mass and class struggle.

Now a large sector of the people is looking to SUCI as an organization of mass and class struggle. We are gradually getting more support from workers, peasants, women and students. We have an agricultural organization and our trade union organization is the fifth largest in the country. SUCI exists in 17 of India's 19 states.

We oppose outsourcing. We are in solidarity, for example, with U.S. workers who lose their jobs through outsourcing, and we oppose also Indian companies that outsource. Outsourcing is a conspiracy to deprive workers of different countries, and we have to maintain worker solidarity.

In India too we have to build solidarity. The British, during their colonial rule, divided people by religion—into Muslim and Hindu—so that the British could "divide and rule." It was painful that the national leaders of the Congress Party helped the conspiracy of the British and became the party mainly of the Hindus. Now the ruling class is following the same policy, both in the name of religion and by the caste system among Hindus. They are dividing people to stop the unity of the proletariat.

It is a hard task for us to convince the common people, the working class, that caste and religion should not divide us. But we must fight together, united, against capitalism and imperialism. □

Rockefeller's machine guns

was one more battle in the continuing war for national liberation of the Black and Brown populations in the United States. Few believe that it will be the last.

On Thursday, September 9, over 1,000 prisoners, long abused by the all-white racist guard force, a vicious prison system, and an economic and political dictatorship held over the poor and working class of this country by the rich, rose up to overpower their tormentors. Within minutes, the inmates seized Cell Block D and 32 guards. Then, from a makeshift megaphone, the inmates issued their demands, many of which reflected the high political content of the rebellion.

Political demands raised

"An immediate end to the agitation of race relations by the prison administration of this State," the prisoners demanded. An end to the racial discrimination against Brown and Black prisoners by the parole board; a replacement of the present parole board appointed by Rockefeller with a board elected by the people; the right to labor union membership while working in the prison and State and federal minimum wage instead of the present slave labor; constitutional right to legal representation at parole board hearings; "an end to the segregation of prisoners from the mainline population because of their political beliefs;" an end to guard brutality against prisoners; and later the prisoners added their demands for amnesty from criminal prosecution and "speedy and safe transportation out of confinement to any nonimperialist country."

"Many prisoners believe their labor power is being exploited," said the declaration of demands, "in order for the state to increase its economic power and to continue to expand its correctional industries (which are million-dollar complexes), yet do not develop working skills acceptable for employment in the outside society, and which do not pay the prisoner more than an average of forty cents a day. Most prisoners never make more than fifty cents a day. Prisoners who refuse to work for the outrageous scale, or who strike, are punished and segregated without the access to privileges shared by those who work; this is class legislation, class division, creates hostilities within the prison."

The prisoners set up a People's Central Committee which included Black, Puerto Rican and white members, organized their own typing pool and sound system. As for the hostages, according to Tom Soto of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee who saw them, the guards were being well treated, undoubtedly much better than the guards had ever treated the prisoners.

Rockefeller rejects amnesty

Nelson Rockefeller, billionaire governor of New York, disagreed. "To do so (grant amnesty) would undermine the very essence" of American society, he said. From the barbed-wire seclusion of his 3,000-acre private estate at Pocantico Hills, Rockefeller rejected the plea of the mediating committee for him to join the negotiations. Instead, this brother of the head of Chase Manhattan Bank ordered the full mobilization of the National Guard units in western New York to prepare a massacre of Attica's inmates.

The demands of the prisoners were never seriously considered, and the most fundamental of the demands, amnesty, was never considered by the State. To the prisoners, this was crucial as many were in danger of being framed up on murder charges for the death of a sympathetic

guard killed by other guards when the rebellion broke out.

Meanwhile, the troop buildup outside the prison continued. Sheriffs' deputies poured in from 13 surrounding counties in their own automobiles, armed with shotguns and 30-30 hunting rifles for "the turkey shoot," as one racist called it. It was clear that Rockefeller's government was not negotiating in good faith.

Under cover of "negotiating," they were preparing the massacre, as hundreds of National Guard troops were moved into the area on Sunday. Police outside the prison grew increasingly hostile to arriving crowds of prisoners' supporters and relatives. One state trooper leveled his shotgun at members of a delegation of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee and growled, "Get out of the roadway or we'll wipe you out!"

Meanwhile, relatives of prisoners were denied access to the prison grounds by police, although relatives of hostages were allowed in. A roadblock one mile from the prison sealed off the prisoners from their relatives and outside supporters. As far as the State was concerned, the prisoners' families had no rights. A curfew was also imposed in the town of Attica to prevent angry Black, Brown and white supporters from exercising their right to be at the scene.

Rockefeller's government had also decided the prisoners had no rights. Not even the right to live.

Yesterday, Monday morning, the State's mobilization was completed, and by 8 a.m., 1,700 troops armed with machine guns, automatic rifles, tear and nausea gas, shotguns, and high pressure hoses were poised for the attack. At 9:45, Oswald gave the signal for the attack to begin. Two Army helicopters circled over the northeast corner of the 55-acre compound where the prisoners were gathered. One dropped canisters of nausea gas onto Cell Block D, while the other swooped down on the men below, firing automatic weapons into the crowd of prisoners, shooting them down in "Vietnam" fashion. The prisoners had no weapons to return the fire but defended themselves as valiantly as they could. Their only means of defense was handmade weapons. It was a massacre.

Capitalist press lied!

Yesterday the capitalist press was full of horror stories of hostages with their throats cut, mutilations and executions. The racist hysteria against the prisoners' uprising was being carefully fanned. Today the truth came out—the guards were all killed in the same murderous assault by police and national guards on the prisoners.

So far, twenty-eight prisoners and nine hostages were reported killed, hundreds of prisoners wounded. The 28 surviving hostages were taken for treatment to a nearby hospital, while the hundreds of wounded prisoners waited for treatment in a small room in the prison, 8 by 10 feet, the floor covered with blood. "It's the worst thing I've ever seen," said one doctor emerging from the prison gate in a bloodstained gown.

Asked if he had any second thoughts after seeing the resulting massacre, Commissioner Oswald patted his huge stomach and calmly replied, "No, I don't." Nelson Rockefeller had no second thoughts either. He agreed that the security of the whole rotten prison system was at stake. The highly political content of the prisoner demands was also a direct



WORKERS WORLD IN 1971

challenge to the dictatorship of wealth

enjoyed by millionaires like Rockefeller. This was not just a prison rebellion but part of a larger class war going on across the country. This was recognized on a national level as President Nixon personally phoned his congratulations to the Governor. Rockefeller was, of course, delighted.

The people were not. Prisons around the country stirred with anger. In Baltimore City Jail, the second revolt within a year broke out, and prisoners of Cleveland County Prison also rebelled. Throughout New York, Rockefeller ordered all inmates in the state's maximum security prisons confined to their cells in fear of spreading rebellion. Rockefeller, sipping his mint julep at his Pocantico Hills estate, may have been delighted with Nixon's support, but he was frantically worried about the rising tide of people's vengeance that is increasingly threatening to sweep him and his wealthy class into the dustbin of history.

Once in a very great while a rich man goes to prison. Maybe he's taking a six-month rap for a company that defrauded the people out of millions; when he gets out after his brief stretch, he's set for life. And even while he's in, every little comfort is provided for him, so that the time passes as pleasantly as possible.

Most of all, he is never really isolated, never forgotten. His lawyers visit him constantly, the guards treat him like a "gentleman," and he is able to conduct his business affairs from prison.

Prisons weren't made for people like this. The fact that a handful of them may be in a few federal institutions is largely an accident.

But the prisons are full, overflowing, exploding with poor, oppressed men and women for whom prisons have meant the end—of life, of happiness, of friends and family. The first stretch becomes a stigma that dooms a young person to a life behind bars. The prisoner never sees a lawyer, is prevented from defending himself, is estranged from his or her family just out of the sheer impossibility of visits to isolated prisons, and can look forward to desperation and disappointment when and if he ever hits the streets again.

For thousands of prisoners, especially the large percentage of Black and other oppressed people routed into the prisons from birth, these conditions have become unbearable. The terrible isolation imposed by the racist authorities has been broken again and again in the only way left to human beings who have been literally sealed in their own tombs: by open rebellion. These rebellions are specifically directed at the numberless injustices that read like a description of the Chamber of Horror; but they are also something more.

They are a passionate cry to brothers



and sisters on the outside, a desperate affirmation that they are alive, there on the inside; they are human beings who, while treated worse than animals, have not been crushed, whose spirit lives on in rebellion.

The Prisoners Solidarity Committee is another absolutely indispensable product of this new spirit. It was formed less than a year ago, when prisoners at Auburn, N.Y., wrote to organizations on the outside for help. Youth Against War & Fascism responded, and soon helped form the Prisoners Solidarity Committee. The committee has expanded to many cities since then, and includes relatives of prisoners and released prisoners themselves.

When news of the PSC reached the jails, it released a dammed-up flood of letters from brothers and sisters telling of the indignities, the brutality, the pain that is a daily part of prison life. But these letters all told something else. They were not pathetic appeals from beaten people; they rang with hope and strength and willingness to struggle. Moreover, the writers were thrilled that they were finally breaking out of their isolation, that people outside were listening and working with them.

The PSC published some of these letters in the pamphlet, "Prisoners Call Out: Freedom!"

The PSC raised some money with this pamphlet and social affairs, and rented a bus so that prisoners' relatives could get to Auburn and visit them. For many of them, it was the first visit in years.

When the Auburn 6 had several court hearings, the PSC got sizable demonstrations of support, even in blizzard conditions. More and more, the PSC became a vehicle whereby the prisoners themselves could speak to the people outside, could generalize their struggle, fuse their grievances and their hopes into the main current of rebellion that is rising in the country as a whole.

The PSC, on hearing of the rebellion, had immediately mobilized all its strength: it sent a delegation to Attica, arranged transportation for relatives, and organized many demonstrations throughout New York State and in several major cities elsewhere. The prisoners knew about all this, and knew that what they had to say would be heard on the outside.

At the most difficult moments, when ruling class hysteria against the prisoners reached its height, the PSC announced from inside Attica that it unconditionally supported the prisoners' demands. A further bond of love and trust was forged in those tense hours.

The isolation of the prisons has been permanently shattered. Even the highest concrete wall, the darkest cell, the cruellest solitary "hole" can no longer hold the terror it once had, for 1,500 men at Attica have looked the worst in the face. □

Reunión Latinoamericana confronta crisis de hambruna

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Con el tema de "Soberanía y Seguridad Alimentaria: Alimentos para la Vida," delegaciones de 15 países se reunieron en Managua, Nicaragua, el 7 de mayo para discutir y planear estrategias para enfrentar la seria crisis de hambre que afecta a los pueblos de América Latina y el Caribe.

Esta reunión presidencial fue resultado de otra reunión de emergencia convocada el 23 de abril por cuatro de los cinco miembros del ALBA llevada a cabo en Caracas, Venezuela. Durante esa reunión los presidentes Evo Morales de Bolivia, Daniel Ortega de Nicaragua, y el Vicepresidente Carlos Lage de Cuba se reunieron con el Presidente de Venezuela Hugo Chávez para firmar un acuerdo especial que desarrollaría sectores agrícolas e industriales para incrementar la producción de granos como el arroz y el maíz, granos con contenido de aceite, carne y leche. Según Prensa Latina, "El acuerdo firmado por los miembros del ALBA también favorece la formación de una cadena comercial de alimentos e incluye un compromiso mutuo para crear una fundación con \$100 millones de dólares como capital inicial para permitir la implementación de los programas y planes de la iniciativa."

Sin embargo, ya que la esencia del ALBA es la integración y el bienestar de todos los pueblos de América Latina y el Caribe, una reunión cumbre más extensa era necesaria para discutir la actual crisis alimenticia.

A la reunión del 7 de mayo en Managua acudieron delegaciones de Bolivia, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Honduras, Haití, San Vicente y Las Granadinas, Cuba, Venezuela, El Salvador, Guatemala, Belice, Panamá, República Dominicana, México y Nicaragua. También hubo representantes de la Organización de Agricultura y Alimentos de la ONU, el Banco Mundial, el Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, el Programa de Alimentos para el Mundo de la ONU, UNICEF, PARLACEN, (Parlamento Centroamericano) y PARLATINO, (el Parlamento Latinoamericano).

Las declaraciones de apertura por cada uno de los países fueron dirigidas a la preocupación y a propuestas sobre la crisis y también señalaron las políticas de los países imperialistas como las culpables de la catástrofe. La cadena de televisión TeleSUR cubrió la sesión.

Ralph Gonsalves, el Primer Ministro de San Vicente y Las Granadinas, declaró muy elocuentemente la necesidad de incluir la pesca en las discusiones sobre la agricultura y alimentos, afirmando que los pequeños países islas como el suyo no tienen el espacio para criar ganado y dependen más de pequeños animales y productos marítimos, pero que la situación climática está afectando la pesca porque los peces tienden a irse a más profundidad del océano. Concluyó, "Yo no veo que los americanos o los europeos nos estén ayudando, de hecho, muchas veces cuando ellos traen programas de diversificación, producción agrícola, etc., ellos perpetúan el fraude entre la gente, (pues) ellos aumentan sus expectativas y es muy poco lo que traen."

El Vicepresidente Esteban Lazo de Cuba resumió lo que es la base real de la

crisis actual: "La esencia de la crisis no está en los fenómenos más recientes, sino en la desigual e injusta distribución de la riqueza a nivel global, y en el intollerable modelo económico neoliberal, impuesto con irresponsabilidad y fanatismo durante los últimos 20 años."

El Presidente Ortega, quien presidió la reunión, expuso la crisis del hambre a través de hechos: "La información de las organizaciones internacionales nos dice que cada 5 segundos un niño menor de 10 años muere a causa de desnutrición, de hambre. Cada minuto que estamos hablando aquí, intercambiando ideas sobre este problema, 12 niños mueren. ¡Y cada hora, 720 niños menores de 10 años mueren de hambre!"

La declaración final firmada por 12 países rechazó las subvenciones en los países desarrollados y el intercambio comercial injusto que afecta a los países no desarrollados. También rechazaron el uso de alimentos para la producción de biocombustibles. Se propuso un plan de acción detallado para ayudar a fortalecer las economías de los países y la producción de alimentos en una forma sostenible. La propuesta de México, que ofreció ser el anfitrión de una conferencia de delegaciones de alto rango sobre la tecnología a final de este mes fue aceptada.

Otras reuniones sobre la cuestión están ocurriendo en América Latina. La Agencia Cubana de Noticias (ACN) reportó que más de 100 representantes de 30 países latinoamericanos y del Caribe participaron en una conferencia sobre la malnutrición juvenil en Santiago de Chile el 6 de mayo. Los días 16 y 17 de mayo, la Quinta Cumbre entre la Unión Europea, Latinoamérica y el Caribe (EU-LAC) tendrá lugar en Lima, Perú. Los temas principales serán "Pobreza, desigualdad e inclusión" y "Desarrollo sostenible: el ambiente, cambio climático y energía". Al terminar la cumbre presidencial del 7 de mayo, fue decidido que la crisis alimentaria fuera discutida en la EU-LAC y en todas las otras reuniones internacionales que se celebren en el futuro próximo.

Imperialistas se reúnen a puertas cerradas

Nueve días antes de la cumbre de Managua, el 28 de abril, la Directora Ejecutiva del Programa Mundial de Alimentación, Josette Sheeran y el Presidente del Banco Mundial, Robert Zoellick se unieron a puertas cerradas en Berna, Suiza, con el Secretario-General de la ONU Ban Ki-moon y ejecutivos de 27 agencias de la ONU para discutir los crecientes precios y las sublevaciones en 37 países provocadas por el hambre extrema.

Según la ACN, Ban exigió \$2,5 mil millones en ayuda para combatir la crisis mundial de hambre durante una conferencia de prensa en Berna el 22 de abril.

¿Cuál fue la solución de Zoellick para la crisis alimentaria? Demostrando su verdadero interés de clase, él propuso que no se limite la exportación de productos de petróleo.

¿Cómo pueden los imperialistas resolver una crisis que ellos mismos crearon? Como dijo Vía Campesina, una organización de pueblos indígenas, pequeños

agricultor@s y campesin@s de todas las partes del mundo, en un documento titulado "Una respuesta a la Crisis Mundial de Alimentos" (www.viacampesina.org), las políticas neoliberales han destruido la capacidad de los países de alimentarse a sí mismos.

Aunque mencionan a los biocombustibles y al calentamiento global que afecta a las cosechas como causas de la crisis alimentaria, ven la falta de la soberanía alimentaria como la causa principal: "Esta crisis también es el resultado de muchos años de políticas destructivas que socavaron las producciones nacionales de alimentos, y obligaron a los campesinos/as a producir cultivos comerciales para compañías multinacionales y a comprar sus alimentos de las mismas multinacionales (o a otras...) en el mercado mundial".

El artículo muestra como ejemplo a México, el cual, después del TLC-AN, se convirtió, de ser un país exportador de maíz en uno dependiente del 30 por ciento de su maíz del importe desde los EEUU. Ahora que la producción de maíz en los EEUU está siendo dedicada más y más a la producción de combustible, hay menos disponible para México. También menciona el caso de Indonesia, que en 1992 produjo soya suficiente para satisfacer el consumo doméstico para las comidas básicas de ese país. Después de abrir sus puertas a las políticas neoliberales, la soya barata de los EEUU inundó su mercado, forzando una reducción en la producción nacional. Un sesenta por ciento es actualmente importado de los EEUU y los precios se han duplicado.

Por esto, sin la capacidad de producir sus propios alimentos como resultado de las recetas neoliberales, combinados con los severos cambios climáticos, los países pobres son víctimas de la especulación del mercado de alimentos y la conversión de productos alimenticios en biocombustibles. Mientras que el consumo de alimentos representa entre 10 y 20 por ciento del ingreso personal en la mayoría de los países desarrollados, en el Tercer Mundo es entre un 60 hasta un 80 por ciento. Y los productos más afectados por la crisis actual son las comidas básicas de las mesas de los pobres, como por ejemplo el arroz y el maíz.

Entonces no es de extrañar que haya habido levantamiento de masas en México, Indonesia, Yemen, las Filipinas, Camboya, Marruecos, Senegal, Uzbekistán, Guinea, Mauritania, Egipto, Camerún, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, la Costa de Marfil, Perú, Bolivia y Haití.

Haití merece atención especial porque es uno de los países más pobres del mundo donde la avaricia genocida de las corporaciones transnacionales queda obscura y patentemente clara. Ochenta por ciento de la población vive debajo del nivel de pobreza y 54 por ciento vive en la miseria extrema. Según el Servicio Paz y Justicia en América Latina, "Hace veinte años Haití producía el 95 por ciento del arroz que era consumido por su población; hoy en día importa de los Estados Unidos el 80 por ciento de ese producto." (www.srpajamericalatina.org)

El hambre extrema en Haití ha forzado a la gente a darle de comer a sus hijos galletas llamadas "Pica" hechas de lodo, un

remedio venenoso contra el hambre. En Cité-Soleil, las galletas son hechas de un lodo amarillo de la meseta central del país, mezcladas con sal y aceite. ¡Cuesta \$5 fabricar 100 galletas, pero aún a ese precio, much@s haitian@s no tienen lo suficiente para comprar una galleta hecha de lodo! Puede llenar la barriga de un/a niñ@ pero el lodo también lleva parásitos y substancias potencialmente letales.

Cuba y Venezuela han ido a ayudar al pueblo haitiano. Entre otras acciones, Venezuela ha enviado más de 600 toneladas de alimentos el 13 de abril, y 50 camiones para la agricultura. Cuba ha estado proveyendo cuidado médico a 1@s más pobres, quienes que no tenían acceso a servicio médicos. Desde hace cinco años, 400 médic@s cuban@s han estado trabajando en Haití; y 600 estudiantes haitian@s estudian medicina en Cuba. Según el presidente de Haití René Préval, para el pueblo haitiano "después de Dios, están los doctores cubanos."

El pueblo muere de hambre mientras las corporaciones prosperan

En un comunicado de prensa el 14 de abril, la gigante corporación estadounidense de alimentos Cargill, reportó "ganancias netas de \$1.03 mil millones en el tercer trimestre del 2008 que terminó el 29 de febrero, una subida del 86 por ciento de los \$553 millones en el mismo período de hace un año. Las ganancias en los primeros nueve meses sumaron \$2.9 mil millones, un incremento del 69 por ciento de los \$1.71 mil millones de hace un año." (www.cargill.com)

El comunicado continúa: "Cargill registró un fuerte tercer trimestre consecutivo en un año en el cual las dimensiones de cambio en la agricultura global son llamativas," dijo Greg Page, el presidente y principal ejecutivo de Cargill. "La demanda por alimentos en las economías subdesarrolladas y por energía mundialmente, está estimulando la demanda por productos agrícolas, a la vez que el dinero para invertir ha entrado en los mercados de bienes de consumo. En relación a la demanda, los abastos mundiales de cereales hoy en día están en su nivel más bajo en 35 años. Los precios están subiendo a niveles sin precedente y los mercados están extraordinariamente volátiles."

Monsanto, otra compañía estadounidense, también reportó ganancias enormes. En un comunicado del 6 de mayo, la compañía dijo: "Como compañía tecnológica de agricultura, tenemos una oportunidad única porque nuestra tecnología crea valía para nuestros clientes agricultores no importa cuál cosecha siembran, dónde vendan sus granos, o a qué precio sea vendido ese grano en el mercado de bienes de consumo... Las robustas ganancias de Monsanto continúan siendo reflejadas en los dividendos. Monsanto ha incrementado sus dividendos seis veces — un aumento de 200 por ciento — desde 2001." (www.monsanto.com)

Monsanto es la corporación más culpable de la producción de semillas transgénicas que han inundado y destruido la agricultura en países del Tercer Mundo, haciéndolos dependientes de las semillas y productos de Monsanto. □